

I woke up in the middle of the night a month ago with this thought, **“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”** I lay there thinking **what is that all about?** I got up and googled it and this is what I found:

“Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success. When you do a thing, do it with all your might. Put your whole soul into it. Stamp it with your own personality. Be active, be energetic and faithful, and you will accomplish your object. **Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.**” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson, American Philosopher

I knew somehow that had meaning to me, and as I lay there, it came back to me. I went and dug up my high school yearbook - 1964 - and there it was under my senior picture, **“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”** Now, who picked that out as something relating to me, I don’t know, as I was not on the yearbook staff, whether it was the editor, some committee, or advisors, I don’t know, but somehow that was the saying selected to be under my senior picture in 1964. And then 48 years later...

Let me go back to May 2011 first and start with the last paragraph of my last year’s race report...this was after I had just completed 57.564 miles in the Mind the Ducks (MTD) 12 Hour race:

“I just checked the USATF record for a 12 hour (road) run for the Women’s 65-69 age group, 48.7198 miles, got me thinking again!!! MTD 2012???? I think I can! I think I can! What do you think Greg? Want to try out that “new bionic knee” you’re getting next month? You will have 11 months to get it ready and working. After what you did Saturday on your worn out knee, I’m sure you will be ready! Do I already have a stretch goal in mind for 2012? You bet I do! And it’s not 48.7198 miles.”

I had checked the record for the Women’s 60-64 age group and found out it was 57.8198 miles, and I felt it was possible for me to do 60 miles next year and break the Women’s 65-69 age group USATF record by almost 12 miles. From this point on, I was planning on breaking that record. In a January 2012, “Runner’s World” issue, there was an article on resolutions for running - 12 in fact - and you could pick any or all of them. Well, the one that stuck with me was “Be More Consistent.” It talked about your training plan and your objectives for the new year and said put them out there - tell everyone - put it on FaceBook - this will motivate you to actually follow through with it. So, I took that to heart and I told everyone and I put it on FaceBook, basically saying I’m going to break the USATF Women’s 65-69 age group record in the 12 hour race, and I’m going to break it by running 60 miles. One thing they neglected to say was that while you were going to be very motivated, you’re going to put an incredible amount of pressure on yourself to achieve this goal...8>)...

I called my coach who happens to be Greg and told him of my plan and asked him if he was up for it. Normally I don’t “train” very much. But this year, since it was my stated objective to break this record, my coach insisted on some event specific training. He talked me into trying to follow what he calls “the law of training specificity” which says that the body responds and adapts to stresses placed on it. His prescription was to train for the 12 hour event by replicating it. In January, we picked a day and ran mile laps around his neighborhood for 6 hours. In February, we ran for 7 hours. In March, 8 hours. In April, we were going to run 9 hours, but he relented and we “only” did 3 hours, but on the MTD course in Rochester, NY (we live near Syracuse, NY). During these three hours, I ran my race day plan which was to run/walk for 5 miles per hour (I would run a mile in 10 minutes or less; walk a 1/2 mile in 7 1/2 minutes or less; run a 1/2 mile in 5 minutes or less; walk a 1/2 mile in 7 1/2 minutes or less; and then repeat this sequence which would be 5 miles every hour - hopefully the “lesses” would equal more

miles). In addition, I belong to a running league at Syracuse University that conducts a weekly event through the fall-winter-spring. Although those track and road events (from 100m to 15K) don't resemble an ultra, they did give me a chance to explore my speed and meet some really fast runners who I learned a lot from.

As race day got closer this year, I watched the weather report and it kept getting hotter and hotter and sunnier and sunnier for race day. This started to get me worried. I had never run an ultra in hot weather. Last year's race temperature was my perfect running weather - cool, overcast, and drizzly. This year - hot and sunny. 8>(... I do not deal with the heat very well at all as many of my friends know, let alone when running. Most all my numerous 5K, 10K and 15K runs were early in the morning and were over before the heat of the day. The day of the MTD race I was anxious because of the day's weather forecast, but I decided I was going to run my race day plan of 5 miles per hour. It was cooler in the morning, and I was feeling fine. I was on track with my plan for the first 4 hours. I stopped for a pitstop and everything was fine. I looked at my watch and saw that I had less than 1 minute to cross the start/finish line and get another lap in for the hour. I started to run fast and I instantly got this nauseous feeling that I usually get at the end of one of my 5K races (I normally just make it through the chute at the finish before I'm on all fours "dry heaving" from the effort I had just put forth in the final 100/200 meters of the race). ( I never eat before or during these races and I rarely even take water from the water stations along the race route). At this point in the race, I lost everything I had eaten. I didn't want to be disqualified for stepping off of the pavement (even on the outside of the pavement), so I kept my feet on the blacktop and aimed as far to the side as I could. Then I kept going, trying to get my stomach back under control, but I had to stop again. Same thing. After a few of these episodes, my stomach settled a little and I was able to keep water down. I drank some ginger ale that Shelley brought to me from the aid station, took a deep breath, and off I went. This was a very critical point for me in the race. I had 8 more hours to complete. My body wanted to stop so bad. I was afraid I was going to hurt myself, but my mind was racing through all sorts of other emotions. How could I stop with everything that had been done to set up this chance for me to break this record, with everything I had said before the race, with all my friends rooting for me at the race and at home, with the USATF race officials here at the race specifically because of me, and here, only 4 hours into the 12 hours race, I'm fighting the biggest physical and mental battle just to keep putting "one foot in front of the other". I walked for a few laps to get my wits about me (Shelley, and the volunteers had everything ready for me when I came around each lap to keep me cool and hydrated) and then I saw Greg ahead of me and I somehow caught up to him, and he helped me calm down a bit. I knew I had over 20 miles in and now I had to do some recalculating and he helped me because at this point my brain was having trouble adding 2+2. At this point, I had to change my plan for the remainder of the race. I was no longer going to be able to keep running/walking a 5 mile/hour pace. I slowed down to somewhere around 4 miles/hour for the remaining hours, hoping to recover and, even more so, hoping for clouds and overcast and cooler temperatures. In addition, I kept hearing "stay cool". I started having the aid station volunteers put bandanas with ice in them around my neck in addition to the "cool bandana" I was wearing from the start of the race. This really helped in cooling me down. I knew it was extremely important that I start drinking much more water because I was in danger of being dehydrated from getting sick at the 4th hour. I doubled my electrolyte tabs and took them every half hour. I drank and drank lots of water and made many more pitstops than I normally do. At one point, coming across the start/finish line, I heard my song, "Eye of the Tiger" the

theme from Rocky III - this was my "III"rd Mind the Ducks - it really gave me a push to keep going. Finally two things happened. I was able to eat Shot Bloks more often. And most importantly, at some point, the sky clouded over. Up until about 90 minutes to go, I was very anxious and nauseous. But now with the cooler temperature and no sun beating down on me, I was finally feeling I was going to make it. Once I felt I was going to break the record (48.7198 miles), I just got happier and happier. And as always, once I smelled the barn, I was off and running! At 11:03 hours I had broken the record, but I wasn't done yet, I continued on and broke my record 5 more times. I stopped with 12 minutes left in the race and 51.471 miles completed. Tom, you were right. I could have walked that last lap, but I left that lap on the course, again!!! Darn it!

I want to thank everyone for the encouragement the weeks before the race, during the race and after the race. I want to thank the wonderful volunteers - we couldn't do any of this without you. I especially want to thank all the runners who throughout the race gave me much encouragement. I enjoyed talking to those runners I was walking and sometimes running with during the race. It was so nice to meet those who are on the FaceBook group and have been talking with for several months. Brenda - great meeting you after our initial "shoe exchange" - hope you are healing. Lauren for bringing the index cards of motivational messages for me - just knowing they were there, if I needed them, was a comfort - and I knew every time you asked me when we were both at "home base" at the same time - "Mary, you OK" that you would have whipped out those cards for me in a *flash* - thanks for bringing them. I'm so glad you decided to run it - now you know what all the hype is about. Christine - I can't imagine running this race without seeing you and doing a few laps with you. Tom Perry for taking all those great photos and your expertise. Shelley - what can I say about you - I know - You ARE the best Race Director. Once again a great race, thanks for making sure I got everything I needed from the aid station and especially all you did to make this a sanctioned USATF record eligible event and doing all the paperwork necessary for me to run for this record. I also want to thank the USATF race officials for being there so this was possible. Dave Farrands - thanks for lugging our stuff up that mountain to where the car was parked! And lastly, thanks to my friend/mentor/coach, Greg - This day would not have happened for me without all the time you spent training and advising me over the last 5 years. ***THIS WAS MY MOMENT IN TIME!***