



Runner at a Crossroads

I have been a runner for 40 years now. All those years and all those miles will forever be etched fondly in my memory, but they have also taken their toll on my body, and in some ways, my life.

For years, I could not imagine taking a vacation that didn't center on a race. Kelli and I have had some great experiences with that mindset, but suddenly, it is no longer a priority. I have missed opportunities to watch my grandkids playing their little league games because there was a local 5K that caused a conflict. I always chose the race. I have chosen to not go out on Friday nights simply because I had to get up early for a race or a long run the next morning. But those days are over. There is

more to life than running, and it is time for some of those other things to take center stage,

When the pandemic hit, I was already in very good running shape, averaging close to 150 miles a month in the two years preceding it. This was only achieved due to total commitment a focus while managing it while traveling someplace new for work just about every week. I thought I was already on the top of my game but when travel stopped, I started running longer and more consistently, and ended 2020 with almost 2200 miles run. Running was the most important thing in my life, and everything else revolved around it.

Looking back at my running life, if I had a chance to do things differently, I would not change a thing. The victories, the defeats, and everything in between are all necessary parts of what has been a wonderful running life. For all those years, that was just who I was. But now, it is time to develop the parts of my life that have been patiently waiting my attention.

I am at a point now where I am ready to turn my primary focus from running to things that have been in my peripheral view over the years, but have rarely been in sharp focus the way that perhaps they should be. This might not have happened quite yet if the body that got me through the first 40 years did not start to break down over the past year. But there is a reason for everything. Sometimes, you have to look within to find it.

I am far from saying farewell to running. You can't just throw away 40 years of your life. Especially 40 years that have provided so much joy and accomplishment. But the drive that has moved me to continue doing it all these years has slowly faded, and I am inching closer to building excitement for what is next in my life, with running still being a part of it when it moves me, but not the primary focus. You can't continue to ignore your body's signs that it is time to slow down forever. It's time to make peace with that fact and accept things the way they are.

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