

## Crossing One Finish Line and Toeing a New Starting Line



I received my first paychecks way back in 1973, and every year since then, I have kept that streak alive. That's a stretch of 50 years. I started running in 1982, and the second longest streak of my life began then. Other than work, which I did because I had to, until I began running, I was not very good at sticking with anything I started. The difference was that work was mandatory, and running was a choice, meaning I could quit whenever I

wanted to. But I never did. Now, forty years later, I guess I can say I stayed with it for long enough to consider it a successful accomplishment. It's hard to explain the reasons I have continued to run all these years, but at this point, I can sum it up in a single sentence. ***I run because I have forgotten how to not run.***



The seven days between Christmas and New Year's Day always has been a time to look back and reflect on the past year's accomplishments, and to look forward with hope and excitement to the next year's goals. For me, this year-end evaluation has always been focused on both career and running. But this year is different, as I write the last page of the novel 50 years in the making called my professional life and start writing the first chapter of a new book called retirement. It's always been important for me to run on the last day of an old year, and to race on the first day of the new year. It bridges everything nicely. My new book's contents are still to be outlined, then hopefully written out loud as I live it, but I already know the content is going to be much different than the volumes already completed.

I was first motivated to run by watching my father, who ran only for his health. He was not into racing but ran simply because his doctor told him his blood pressure was too high, and he prescribed running to help combat it. As soon as I started running, I became competitive with myself and was drawn to racing immediately. I liked the Tee shirts, I liked the atmosphere, and I liked the fact that on race day, I could always run faster than I could run without to bib. This is commonly referred to as Race Day Magic, and it really is a thing. To this day, I cannot scientifically explain it, but I guess that magic is not based on science anyway.

I still remember my very first race, and my first experience with Race Day Magic. It was a 5K road race in Massapequa on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1982. I had started running in mid-April of that year, and until that race, I had never run a mile in under 9. But with what felt like training pace effort, I ran the first mile of the race in 8 minutes flat. I thought "Wow, I didn't know I could do that." But I paid for it by the 3<sup>rd</sup> mile, which involved a fair bit of walking. I finished the race in around 25 and a half minutes, and was over the moon ecstatic. I was hooked, and since then, I have

always been a runner who loves to race. I have 40 years of tee shirts to show for it (but many have recently been donated to Goodwill.) I also have running logs, numerous photos, millions of memories, the decades of 4am wake-ups and the friends I have made and kept along the way.

I have not written the past few months because I have been highly distracted by wrapping up my career, and it has dominated my thoughts and kept me from doing much else. When it comes down to it, I suck at multi-tasking. Now, the diversions are behind me, and I can finally focus on whatever I choose to, and writing will be one of the things on the top of my list of activities. I also plan to earn a running coach certification in the next couple of months and can't wait to first earn it, then put it to good use. I look forward to running with others, some of whom I am personal friends with, and others who I know only through the Internet. I plan to start going to Big Peach Monday night runs and help out where I can. If you have time and want to meet for a run, just let me know. I guess that starting now, and time and any place is good. I would also be open to a post run brewery stop, if you are so inclined. 😊

After 50 years, I am finally ready to exhale. I hope you will plan to join me on my new starting line.

Michael Selman  
Five Star Senior Ambassador

I would love to hear from you. You can always reach me at [durunruner@yahoo.com](mailto:durunruner@yahoo.com)