

....it's like jogging.

The first days, the first months or even the first years of jogging are not easy. Especially if this is the first time in your life that you have made up your mind to get into it.

Just as they say « Happiness is not a destination, It is the way... » Jogging isn't a destination either. There can't be a time where one tells to oneself « I have arrived ». The secret, the challenge and the happiness to jogging is the Everyday Effort which in the end of each round you come out as a « winner »

Having said that, if you are the type of a person that never give yourself credit on the little steps... you are IN for a big disappointment because this would simply means, you will always have a problem finding any pleasure in jogging.

Every little step towards this new experience should be rewarded... and before you know it, small rewards will eventually turn into ONE BIG reward and by reward I mean, this inner strong feeling of success that doesn't just come and go as it tends to do so very often during the first months but the real deep PLEASURE that sits deep down within.

It's funny, for a long time, I never thought jogging was a journey, a journey within even when every evidence of fatigue may express itself outwardly; the sweat, the body pains...etc, Jogging is a journey WITHIN. The first few months of jogging are a pure struggle. The minute you put your trainers on and ready to go, the soul disappears and the mind takes over. The thoughts of failure, fatigue and the distance that lays ahead start taking you over and control your thinking panel. The feeling of lack sets in and you find yourself even missing the very couch that made you wanting to leave the house and get some fresh air in the first place...

Just as it may seem on every hard work, JOGGING is a struggle. There's a fight inside you which may seem to include two beings. One that tells you, it's not worth the struggle, this is the one that more or less disagrees with you everytime you come up with a new constructive idea and the second person is the one that seem to always support your ideas. Now I wonder, if there are 2 people living in me and always seem to be in opposition, which one should I listen to ? It wasn't until after many years of questioning myself, that I realized if there are two people living in me and I can clearly distinguish them, so, WHO AM I? Am I one of the two, both of them or rather the third person ?

The conclusion I came up with is that the two people living within, are actually part of me, they are unmovable, and I am that bigger picture, the

BEING watching and nourishing them. I see this whole situation as me being the tree and the other two being the branches ?

Years back when I came across the poem of William Henley « INVICTUS » with the famous line « I am the master of my Fate, I am the captain of my Soul ». I am not sure, I understood then, what I understand now... the knowledge of me being the tree and the other people within being the branches. Now I am sure that in each one of us, in every person, there live one strong BEING, that is bigger than our thoughts, bigger than the mind, which most of the time we drives us into negative feelings such as Fear, Anger, Jealousy, Weakness ...etc.

This understanding have helped me go though life fearless, knowing that there is bigger picture in me that knows what's best for me, that knows, what to say, how to say it and especially when to say it.

Through jogging, I have come to realize how easy it is to ignore the negative voices within, wipe them off and move forward with certainty. Funny thing is though, when the person within have failed to convince me into sitting idle at home instead of going out there and work out, it disappears as quickly as it settled in. Throughout the years, I've watched the voices coming in and out extremely often. Now I know that instead of trying to shake them off and be mad at them unsuccessfully, I am to learnto negotiate with them. On the outside, it may seem like I'm talking to myself, but I am convinced that I am not. My inner conversation would be something like this...« I know you are around, I can feel your presence, I know you want me to stay and continue dwelling on what's wrong in my life, continue dwelling on the future or the past which is of no use to me at this moment, but I'll suggest to first go for a quick jogging and when I'm back, I promise to spend some time with you » Now, this all sounds crazy to you I know, but, I can assure you, it works. Most of the times if not always, when I get back from jogging, after having emptied my worries and cleared my mind, the negative person or presence in me disappears, why ? Because I believe it can no longer survive under a positive atmosphere, it cannot feed on optimism. Exactly within short instances of this realization, in the absence of the negative person comes the presence of the positive presence (the one that's loving my company).

Sometimes, just before going for a run, the negative person can become so present that it can even attract some very strong possibilities (excuses) of making you not being able to leave the house.

One morning for example, just as I've finished putting on my trainers it started pouring outside like cats and dogs, out of nowhere... It was obvious that one could not go for a run on such an extreme weather condition. Just

when I was ready to sit down and rejoice of the evident excuse, I remembered and felt very strongly the presence of that negative person within, I collected myself, hurried to the dresser, grabbed my rain jacket and off I went. You'll not believe it if I tell you that in less than fifteen minutes of running, the rain stopped as abruptly as it had started, gave way to the most beautiful rainbow ever ! followed by several other small rainbow... what a view it was !

I was now running on a wild coastal path filled with wild trees on one side and on the other side, some deep corals just before reaching the ocean, the atlantic ocean. I don't remember being filled with so much pleasure in my entire life.

After years of this practice and through jogging, I now feel the presence of the negative presence within, less and less.

It hasn't quite disappeared as I am now certain, it's part of me but I can at least say, it is becoming more and more dormant.

Jogging has taught me to go WITHIN, to appreciate the simple things in life, it has taught me confidence, it has proven to me that we are stronger than what we think. Has taught me that there is more to jogging than just the sweating and the staying in shape. Having said that, you definitely do stay in shape but not just in a physical form. You stay in shape also within.

It has helped me to understand that I AM the big picture, that I AM the tree and all those living beings within me are merely branches.

After many years of jogging and after coming into realization that jogging is a journey, I now look forward to every new day knowing that no matter the circumstances, if I am healthy and still breathing, JOGGING has it's place within.

On a separate account but somehow closely attached.... Can a relationship, an intimate relationship be compared to the very experience of JOGGING? The whole journey that first starts with admiring (joggers and the well being), the drive to actually wanting to try it out yourself before it hits us on the many challenges that are IN this « gift », we then struggle to understand and cope, we realize or rather are surprized how much we can learn about ourselves (if we hang on long enough) and finally, we understand that it was the journey that counted, that made us grow, that made us live and not simply survive and if we eventually have the opportunity to look closely enough within, we experience the real inner joy, the HAPPINESS...

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