

Running Impacts My Psyche - Friday July 7, 2011

Written by Jay Fares

Friday, 08 July 2011 11:55 - Last Updated Tuesday, 12 July 2011 04:24

Running Impacts My Psyche - Friday July 7, 2011

People in our running group often comment on how well I am doing and on my weight loss, which is greatly appreciated and extremely encouraging! However, there is a part of me that they can't see except through a small window that is entirely controlled by me – it is my Psyche. I have to tell you that my Psyche and mental wellbeing has been affected by running even to a greater extent than my physical body. I am actually happy - I can taste the joy of life in every breath I take. Not that I was unhappy before, but it feels that I am appreciating more the little things in life. Instead of passing them by and never stopping to appreciate them; Now, I slow down, contemplate and enjoy them for what they are at the current moment.

What running enabled me to do is to interrupt my habits that took over my life a bit at a time without me noticing them. My sitting on the sofa and watching TV (what a waste of time), my overeating, my rudeness and impatience with others. Now, I appreciate other people more, and even enjoy their company and seek to learn and better understand them.

I noticed that when I am running on the road people acknowledge and greet me even from their cars. I think these people wish they were running themselves like I am doing. They are closeted runners that need to come out and unleash their potential. Outdoor workers smile when I greet them on my run and they often reciprocate the greeting more intensely. Do you acknowledge other runners or greet other people when you are running? If you don't you should. I think outdoor workers consider runners nearer to them than the rest of the population. When we run we are not shielded behind the metal of our cars and thus we are nearer to them. While running outside, we suffer from the heat and weather like the workers do. That brings us into some commonality with them. Perhaps they think that we are superior to them in every way – but are we really? Should human beings be valued by what they own or by who they are? Is Bill Gates of Microsoft more important than Jonas Salk who developed the Polio vaccine and refused to patent it? When asked about patenting, he said “Would anyone patent the sun?”

This week I was pressed at work and could not easily shed my stresses except towards the middle of my running sessions, after which the momentum enabled me to let go. I did the regular Sunday and Tuesday track sessions and the Thursday and Friday morning loop runs. This morning I went on the Hills-Dock Pond-AAA-Hills run and I took it easy. I did about 5.5 miles in 1 hour and 17 minutes. I usually make it in 1:10 or 1:07, but I didn't care. I just wanted to stay on my feet a little bit longer.

During my long Friday run I was thinking about the value of human beings and how each one of

Running Impacts My Psyche - Friday July 7, 2011

Written by Jay Fares

Friday, 08 July 2011 11:55 - Last Updated Tuesday, 12 July 2011 04:24

us should leave a legacy behind. You see, this week I lost a childhood friend of mine. He died from a massive heart attack while by himself at home in Doha, Qatar. He was from the same village I come from in Lebanon. We went to the village elementary school together. The school consisted of two rooms only. Instruction was done for grades 1-5 in one room. There were five rows of desks, one for each grade and the teacher taught the lessons alternating between each grade. If you were smart you could learn the lessons of other grades at the same time. It was so cold in the winter there, that each student brought his own lit oak wood charcoal in a tin to keep under his desk and to warm himself up. My friend taught me how to light the charcoal and keep it going. We used to put it in a discarded tin of (NIDO) powdered milk with holes in the bottom to keep the air flowing and a metal handle to hold the hot tin with. We also went together to the same intermediate, high school and college and were friends during all these years. His dad had an olive press in the village that he operated single handedly with the help of his horse. The horse went in a loop turning the large stone wheels that crush the olives. After the crushing the paste like substance was put in blankets woven from goat hair and pressed to release the oil. Goat hair does not absorb oil or water, that's why Bedouins use it also to weave their tents. Obviously, I am very saddened for his loss, but I am more saddened that his kids did not truly know him as I think they should have. He sacrificed himself working outside his country for them to prosper, not unlike many of the third-world workers we meet here.

I hope running is helping you give quality time to your families. I hope it is helping you listen better to the needs of your children, your spouses, and your friends.

Life is but a joy when you live it.

This Wednesday, I left the office late, and I was passing the Hills Park at about 5:40 heading home with my business attire on. When I was passing, I got the distinct urge to drive my car to the parking lot and see the runners gathered there take off. Such a site would have made me happy. Perhaps one day I will....