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THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATED WITH TRAINING  
FOR AND COMPLETING A MARATHON

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A dissertation submitted to The Graduate School of the University of Missouri  
in partial satisfaction of requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Education  
with an emphasis in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies  
and a Specialization in Adult Education

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to determine if transformational learning is an outcome of the experiences of training for and completing a marathon.

Transformational learning has gained visibility and greater acceptance in the learning community in recent years due in large part to the efforts of Jack Mezirow and associates.

This visibility and acceptance has catalyzed research studies to better understand the theory and its application, but none have linked the use of endurance racing to transformational learning.

The design of this study was a phenomenological case study. The research included four participants who had previously completed marathons, who belonged to the same running group and were running the 2009 Sunburst Marathon in South Bend, Indiana. The intent of the study was to utilize the researcher's general grasp of the phenomenon as an eight-time marathon finisher to investigate the experiences of the participants and provide interpretation of the components and their essence. Data was collected through pre and post-race interviews, observation and participant journaling.

The experiences captured throughout the process were analyzed and four distinct categories emerged: social, emotional, physical and environmental. The learning associated with these categories was compared to the elements of the theory of transformational learning and the results demonstrated the presence of transformational learning as a result the experience. The participants' learning included more than accomplishing their pre-determined goals. The participants challenged at least one of

their existing paradigms that included how they viewed themselves as runners, spouses, friends, and parents. This challenge was triggered with a disorienting event and subsequent self-reflection and conscious choice to accept the learning.

The findings of this research establish potential significance to the fields of adult education, physical therapy and management. Adult educators, whether in academic, business, therapeutic or informal settings, can replicate the triggers identified in this study attempting to disorient the learner and prompt critical reflection. Potential opportunities for transformational learning include the time and space that follows the completion of an assessment or practicum.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Surgeon General of the United States has recommended that men and women of all ages engage in some form of moderate exercise on a daily basis to realize an increased health. Increased health includes the reduction of the development of high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes. Additional benefits include the reduction of the symptoms of anxiety, weight control and the reduction of body fat. This report also indicated that more than 60% of adults in the United States do not engage in the recommended daily activity, but roughly 40% of the population meets and sometimes exceeds this target (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). Individuals striving to meet this target participate in a range of activities from walking, dancing and yoga to more intense aerobic activities. Included in the intense activities is the sport of Marathon running.

The process of registering for, training and completing a Marathon is an accomplishment that only a small percentage of the population will ever know. This accomplishment is underscored with physical and mental challenges and the dedication to confront these challenges to simply cross a finish line. The simplicity of the finish line takes on many meanings to the dedicated few who cross it. It represents a sense of accomplishment that potentially transcends running and can be applied to other aspects of the participants' lives. The experience that produces this transcendent effect is at the center of this study.

The learning associated with this transcendence is that of transformational learning (Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 1998; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 1991; Taylor, 1986). This theory is rooted in the belief that true learning is initiated by a disorienting event and is

realized through the conscious reflection of the assumptions surrounding the learner's beliefs, feelings and actions. The disorienting event can be as subtle as a beautiful sunrise or tragic as the death of a loved one (Cohen & Piper, 2000). In general, transformational learning requires increased reflective and critical thinking compounded with a willingness to be open and accepting to the perspectives of others. This theory truly emphasizes the importance of the learning journey and is not simply focused on an end-point result.

The theory of transformational learning is important to the world of adult education, because it brings the early constructivist thought (Kegan, 2000; Piaget, 1954) into an applicable form for Generation X and beyond. This is critical because the motivators, barriers and societal expectations surrounding adult education have drastically changed due to increased technology and a greater focus on self (Sims, 2008). There has also been a great change in societal expectations of individuals living and working in a more culturally aware environment (Uggla, 2008). This environment is partially due to the global nature of industries and to increased availability of travel and communications between different countries.

In addition, the theory has added an understanding of a possible effective role of an educator. It builds on the humanistic philosophy (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969) and stresses that the educator helps learners examine their assumptions based on results, behaviors and feelings. Looking deep inside of the learning event and surrounding assumptions has challenged the recent corporate paradigm of purely focusing on the results. This role is more widely accepted in educational formats, and is gaining momentum within the world of human resource development (HRD) (Argyris, 1991;

Senge, 2006). The role of an instructor or facilitator holds the potential to have great impact on the growth of the individuals within the corporation and the corporation itself. The theory demonstrates that there are many paths to follow to achieve success in making a difference on an individual and group basis. Tobin (1996) affirms this through examples of how transformational learning of individuals is leveraged to realize organizational benefits. Both the individual and corporation benefit through the alignment of the learning and corporate strategies.

This study will explore the path paved through the benefits of training for a Marathon with a running group. The training includes group runs and information on nutrition, injury prevention and race day strategy. The transformational experiences will be observed, but also recorded throughout the process by participant journaling. The support of the running group provides methods to increase the probability of completing the event by building on two of the greatest motivators to Marathon runners, social affiliation and recognition (Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007). In addition, the reflection initiated through journaling is a way to link the experience to potential transformational learning (Cranton, 2006).

#### Problem Statement

Transformational learning has gained visibility and greater acceptance in the learning community in recent years due in large part to the efforts of Jack Mezirow and Associates (2000). This visibility and acceptance has generated research studies to better understand the theory and its application (Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 2001, 2006; Fletcher, 2003; Taylor, 2007). The setting for the majority of the existing research on transformational learning is in formal higher education (Taylor). However, Fletcher

notes that recent educational research has begun to recognize the validity of transformational learning outside of a formal educational setting.

The popularity of Marathon running is increasing among people of all ages (Bramble & Lieberman, 2007). As a result of this increased popularity, the sport has also been the focus of recent research (Bramble & Lieberman, 2007; Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007; Raglin, 2007). This research ranges from the evolution of Marathon running to the physical and psychological elements of the sport. Even though some institutions of higher education are now teaching a course on Marathons, the majority of the training and experience occur in a non-formal educational setting.

The increased popularity of Marathon running and the greater acceptance of transformational learning provide an interesting opportunity to gain perspective on the intersection of the research in both areas. Research has been conducted on the physiology of Marathon running (Billat, 2001; Coyle, 2007; Hausswirth & Lehenaff, 2001; Midgley et al., 2007, Williams, 2007), the psychology of Marathon running (O'Connor, 2007; Raglin 2000, 2007; Stevinson, 1998) and the motivation for completing a Marathon (Johnsgard, 1985a, 1985b; Masters et al., 1993; Oagles & Masters, 2003). Additionally, Marathon runners have written about the learning associated with their experiences in training for and completing a Marathon (Battista, 2002; Burfoot, 2007; Karnazes, 2007), and a documentary, *Spirit of the Marathon* (2008), was produced highlighting the experience of both elite and non-elite Marathon runners. Research has also been conducted on the concepts of transformational learning (Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Cranton, 2006; Daloz, 2000; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow 1991, 2000; Taylor 1997) and the practical application of the theory (Cohen & Piper, 2000; Cranton, 2000,

2006; Kasl & Elias, 2000; Yorks & Marsick, 2000). The current gap in the literature is the absence of a link between the experiences related to training for and completing a Marathon and the transformational learning associated with the process.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to determine the transformational experiences, if any, of participants training and completing a Marathon. The physical and mental stresses that accompany this task provide participants the opportunity to experience some level of disorientation and potentially challenge some of their existing paradigms.

With that said, the primary research question being explored in this study is: What is the transformational experience of participants training for and completing a Marathon? This question is intended to detect the presence of transformational learning throughout the process. Secondary questions within the study are intended to provide a richer framework to view, if any, the transformational learning of Marathon runners. These questions include:

1. What experiences catalyze the transformation of the adult learner who trains for and completes a Marathon?
2. What domains of learning is the transformation associated with?

### Significance of the Study

The significance of this study to the adult education community is found in the distinctions and descriptions of the different domains of learning. Learning from the physical domain is expected for something as physically challenging as running 26.2 miles, but it is the emotional, social and spiritual domains where gaining perspective of

the disorientations, reflection and social validation would be of most interest to the adult learning community. The transformational experiences of runners reminds the learning community that adult learners are self-directed (Grow, 1991, 1995; Knowles, 1975, 1980; Merriam, 2001) and for every intended learning outcome there is additional learning catalyzed by components of the process.

Additionally, the adult education community might better understand the process of social validation within the running communities. This increased understanding would aid educators in gaining a deeper appreciation for the influence this has on the learner. The data could help the adult educator facilitate a similar process in more structured and formal settings. More specifically, the data could be utilized in a small group structure to establish new perspectives within a topic or organization (Kasl & Elias, 2000; Tobin, 1996).

Adult educators would also be able to gain a better understanding of the disorientations that were identified through the course of the study. This understanding would provide educators with the opportunity to build a level of disorientation into the programs they are planning and bracket them in a safe environment. The combination of disorientation, a safe environment and the time and space to reflect could increase the development of each individual. The transformational learning process as a function of the need for organizational change holds the potential to reach the end result while establishing shared ownership.

The two additional fields that could benefit from understanding the transformational learning of Marathon runners are management and therapy. Management would benefit by understanding how physical or mental stress disorients



their staff. They would also benefit from understanding the process of reflection and social validation. This knowledge could be used to react to unplanned disorientation, or to catalyze needed change or organizational learning and development.

Physical and occupational therapists could also benefit from the study. Gaining a better appreciation for how physical disorientation manifests in other domains of their patients could help in the design and execution of the required therapeutic program. A deeper appreciation for the influence self-reflection has on the patient may also entice them to include meditation or journaling into their overall program. Therapists may also benefit in their own learning through the disorientations that are generated with their patients.

### Key Terms

**Adult Learning:** Adult learners are individuals capable of directing their own learning, have gained and are aware of their life experiences, have a learning need related to their roles in life, are interested in immediately applying new knowledge and are self-motivated (Merriam, 2001).

**Domains of Learning:** Domains of learning, as referenced in this study, are the dimensions or distinctions of how new data, skills or paradigms manifest to the adult learner. The domains are: emotional (Goleman, 2002), physical (Heckler, 1997) and spiritual (Dirkx 1997; Pearson, 1991).

**Marathon:** A Marathon is a 26.2 mile running event that an individual completes within 8 hours.

**Transformational Learning:** Learning rooted in the belief that true learning is catalyzed by a disorienting event and is realized through the conscious reflection of the

assumptions surrounding the learner's beliefs, feelings and actions (Cranton, 2006, Mezirow, 1991). Transformational learning changes how we know as opposed to what we know (Kegan, 2000).

### Organization of the Study

The organization of the study will include six chapters. The first chapter provided an introduction to the purpose, key terms and significance of the study. Chapter 2 will provide a review of the relevant literature. Chapter 3 will describe and justify the methods of the study. Chapter 4 will be the analysis of the data. Chapter 5 will present the relationship of the analyzed data to the theory of transformational learning. Chapter six will provide interpretations, reflections and conclusions of the study.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The material presented in this chapter is intended to provide details and a contextual framework for the transformational learning associated with running a Marathon. The literature being reviewed in this chapter includes adult learning, transformational learning, domains of learning and marathon running. The literature associated with each of these variables provides the background of each, and the context of this research demonstrates their interrelated nature. The literature represented in this chapter was selected for its relevance to the purpose of this study.

The literature on adult learning is a brief overview of the foundational assumptions and on two additional key elements. The first is descriptions of formal, non-formal and incidental learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2001). This information is intended to provide clear distinctions and demonstrate the potential relevance of these distinctions to the transformational learning associated with running a marathon. The second is information on the humanistic philosophy of adult education. This information provides fundamental foundations to transformational learning and establishes how this theory manifests in practice.

The literature on transformational learning presents the philosophical foundations and components of the theory (Mezirow, 1991), while the review on the different domains of learning and marathon running gives insight into potential sub-categories within the study. The framework outlined through the distinctions of the domains will aid the reader in gaining a deeper understanding of the potential for learning catalyzed through participation in a Marathon. The details of the physical and mental challenges of

completing a Marathon and data concerning the motivation of these individuals is intended to bring the concepts of this research into practice.

### Adult Learning

The systematic study of adult education began to take shape in the early twentieth century (Merriam, 2001). Andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn, anchors this systematic study and has yielded five underlying assumptions concerning adult learners (Knowles, 1980). The five assumptions describe adults as learners who are capable of directing their own learning, have gained and are aware of their life experiences, have a learning need related to their roles in life, are interested in immediately applying new knowledge and are self-motivated.

The underlying requirement that adult learners be capable of directing their own learning is also referred to as being self-directed (Cox, et. al., 2003; Grow, 1991, 1994; Hiemstra, 2003; Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1971). The characteristics of being self-directed are represented along a continuum of dependence to independence. Learners that fall closer to the dependent end of the continuum require more introductory material and teacher-driven activities such as lecture (Grow, 1991, 1994; Merriam, 2001). The learners that fall closer to the independent end of this continuum have a greater need and appreciation for learner-driven activities such as group discussions and independent projects (Grow, 1991, 1994; Merriam, 2001, Tight, 2002). The rationale for the move from teacher-driven activities to learner-driven activities is represented in the second assumption.

Houle (1980) provided a contextual framework for the practical application of andragogy and the principles of self-directed learning. Houle's theory outlines three

modes of learning: inquiry, instruction and performance (Houle, 1980; Langenbach, 1988). Inquiry is a process of generating new ideas or strategies, and the learning associated with the activities may be intentional or a by-product of the specific task (Houle). Instruction is a learning-focused process that has defined objectives and is generally provided in structured learning environments. (Langenbach, 1988).

Performance is the process of applying new skills and knowledge to life and incorporating them as a fundamental part of the learner's worldview (Houle, 1980; Krieger, 1988). The key contextual framework provided by Houle's theory is that adults must choose to learn or acknowledge the learning associated with inquiry. They also must choose what they apply to their daily lives and incorporate into their fundamental worldview.

The learners' acquisition of knowledge and skills through their life experiences coupled with the awareness of both is essential to the foundations of an adult learner. The learning associated with self-directed activities build on the worldview or story of each participant (Stone, Patton & Heen, 1999). This assumption acknowledges that learners have a unique perspective on any given learning opportunity and will use their worldview to interpret the experience (Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1975, 1980). The learners' interpretation is not only dependent on their worldview, but also on their roles in life (Houle, 1980).

Adults have a variety of roles within their lives and these roles are critical to the underlying definition of the adult learner. The roles that adult learners fulfill along with the learning opportunities they choose to explore establish the contextual framework for what and how they approach their learning needs (Houle, 1980; Knowles, 1975, 1980).

Some of the many roles that adults have can include: employee, parent, friend, child, citizen and runner. The urgency of the learning associated with these roles is determined through the learners' desire to immediately apply the new knowledge or skills (Houle, 1980; Langenbach, 1988).

The decision of how to apply newly acquired knowledge and skills is also foundational to the definition of the adult learner. Learners may choose to apply their new knowledge or skills in practice (Houle, 1980; Knowles, 1975, 1980; Langenbach, 1988). They may also choose to apply each as a method to validate or refute their current worldview (Mezirow, 1991). Regardless of how the new knowledge or skills are immediately applied, the desire is fueled through internal motivation and not through external drivers.

Internal motivation factors vary from learner to learner, but the learning cannot be solely driven by an external requirement (Knowles, 1975, 1980). Internal motivators for adult learners include the: need to build or establish social relationships, to learn new skills to stimulate life and further explore cognitive interest (Cranton, 2006). External factors, such as rewards and recognition, hold the potential to catalyze a learning need, but it is the internal motivation that drives the adult learner.

These assumptions define the adult learner from the lens of andragogy (Knowles, 1975, 1980). The next section will provide definitions and distinctions for formal, non-formal and incidental learning. The exploration of these distinctions became more prominent in the 1960s and 1970s as the concept of lifelong learning was popularized (Tight, 2002). Studies on lifelong learning highlighted the fact that based on the theory

of andragogy, adults have the potential to learn where and when they choose. This includes formal, informal and incidental settings.

### *Formal Learning*

Formal learning is usually intentional, highly structured and institutionally sponsored (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). This includes learning that is provided through educational or training systems (Tight, 2002). These systems include higher institutions of learning, trade schools and corporate training systems. The Morrill Land Act of 1862 set the stage for policy making at a national level for formal adult education in institutions of higher education (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994).

Additional pieces of legislation in the early 1900s built on the Morrill Land Act and began to generate educational opportunities for adults (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). One of the key components of the Morrill Land Act was that the scope included both private and public institutions. The historical importance of this is that this enabled all accredited institutions of higher education to receive government funding for most programs. This economic benefit held the potential to provide educational opportunities for specialized programs to students who may not be able to participate without this support. Corporate training systems, or company sponsored learning and development programs, are also evolving from pedagogical content-centered learning to a learner-centered process more in tuned with the underlying elements of andragogy.

A keystone of this movement was the introduction of tuition reimbursement programs. By 1976, tuition reimbursement programs were in place in nearly all categories of companies with 1000 or greater employees (Morse, 1984). The timing of these programs was extremely important. The 1970s saw the end of the conflict in

Vietnam and foreshadowed the presence of the baby boomer generation into the workforce.

These programs had a central focus on attraction and retention of their employees. Since, retention was centrally important, corporations placed limitations on the subjects that their employees were reimbursed for (Morse, 1984). These limitations aided employees in expanding knowledge for their current position, keep pace with new technology and gain the knowledge and skills required to obtain their next position within the company. Additionally, companies sometimes require staff participating in the tuition reimbursement program to maintain their employment for a set duration of time or repay the company for the tuition they have provided. This guarded against educating staff for another company or a totally different career.

Another key event with respect to corporate educational support was the generation of continuing education units (C.E.U.). In 1974, the New York Board of Regents began to evaluate national programs for credibility (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). This effort was important to raise the standards of corporate learning and to ensure that employees were gaining recognition for the learning that the workforce was obtaining. This also laid solid groundwork for an ever-growing relationship between higher education institutions and corporate America (Stubblefield & Keane).

### *Informal/Incidental Learning*

Merriam (2001) explains that informal learning occurs wherever and whenever the learner chooses to take advantage of a learning opportunity. Informal learning is generally intentional, but is not necessarily highly structured or institutionally sponsored (Marsick & Watkins, 2001). This form of learning includes incidental and self-directed



learning (Mundel & Schugurensky, 2008). Informal learning is comprised of three key elements: reflection, the need to learn and creativity

The reflective element of informal learning is intended to surface the learner's knowledge and beliefs while pursuing a greater understanding or increased skill-set (Livingstone, 1999). This is fundamental to the inductive nature of the learning. Formal education outlines the desired outcomes and goals associated with the intended learning (Mundel & Schugurensky, 2008). In contrast, informal education begins with the learner reflecting on what learning is required or desired in their daily routine (Marsick & Volpe, 1999).

The need to learn can be prompted through internal or external disorientations or triggers (Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 1997; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 1991). The physical and mental challenges of training for and completing a Marathon provide such a trigger for the learner. The learner must learn about several factors. These factors range from basics such as the running attire, running form, and physical training to more complex ones like mental preparation and post-race challenges (Bramble & Lieberman, 2007; Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007; Raglin, 2007).

Once a need is recognized, the learner applies creativity to generate multiple options to fulfill it (Merriam, 2001). In the example of Marathon running, the need to apply creativity into the training plan varies from learner to learner. Some Marathon runners have specific time goals they have identified, while others simply want to finish all 26.2 miles (Newcomer, 2008). Some runners can budget time each day to run, while others can only budget time three days a week. Balancing training and the remainder of daily personal obligations cause runners to find new ways to meet all of these demands.

An example of creative training includes running to the drycleaner with a backpack full of laundry to get a run in and get your laundry done. The goal is to meet whatever expectations the runners establish for a given Marathon. The creativity is in the choices they make in training and their alignment with daily life.

Incidental learning is a subset of informal learning (Tight, 2002). Marsick and Volpe (1999) describe the characteristics that underscore this distinction as being influenced by chance, not being overly conscious and linked to others. This form of learning is also absent “from externally imposed criteria” (Livinstone, 1990, p. 2). Several occurrences of incidental learning associated with running were presented by Battista (2002). In his book, *How Running Changed My Life: True Stories of the Power of Running*, he captures the lessons over 40 runners learned through their experiences in running. This includes learning about relationships with parents (Stumps, 2002), the value of life (Holt, 2002) and stress management (Barber, 2002). Each of these runners did not seek their lessons as a part of a set of objectives, nor from a qualified instructor in class or a seminar. Instead, they found these lessons as a by-product of running. This form of learning is the focal point of the current study.

Additionally, informal learning can be compiled into four major groupings (Tusting, 2003). The first is the setting or the context that the learning occurs. In the case of informal learning it occurs outside of a formal educational system (Livinstone, 1999; Tusting, 2003). The second group is the planning of the learning. Informal learning is not the result of planned objectives or a set of learning objectives (Lohan, 2000). The third group is the use of assessments. Informal learning does not include formal or standardized assessments. Lastly, the role of the instructor defines the final

group. Informal learning generally does not have a formal instructor, but relies on a non-formal relationship between the instructor and the student (Tusting, 2003).

I believe that we are all both beginners and experts in life, learning and self. With this in mind, adults must be self-directed and open to experience formal, informal and incidental learning. Understanding their role as both learner and teacher in any given situation establishes solid expectations within a learning opportunity. Additionally, making the conscious choice of where and what to learn places the adult learner in the center of the learning process. The following section provides contextual framework of the adult learner within the humanistic philosophy.

### Humanistic Philosophy

The historical foundations of the humanistic philosophy can be traced back as far as Aristotle and Confucius (Elias & Merriam, 1995). The driving purpose of the humanistic philosophy is to develop people who are open to change and growth when the opportunities present themselves (Elias & Merriam; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2006). These opportunities are generally brought to the attention of the learner through some source of disorientation (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991). The opportunity is capitalized on through critical reflection and partnering with peers, managers or teachers to aid in the framing and validation of the learning. The methods associated with the philosophy along with the roles of the teacher and learners are distinct.

According to the humanistic philosophy the methods of instruction are most effectively driven by the learner (Merriam, 1991; Patterson, 1973). These methods must provide for the opportunity to learn from the various domains of learning and build on the diverse worldview of the learner (Knowles, 1975, 1980). This diversification implores

the educator to utilize multiple styles and identify specific needs and interest as they facilitate a given lesson (Rogers, 1969). The methods should also help in establishing a link for the learner to environmental application (Kidd, 1973). This link is a catalyst for learning as adult learners must acknowledge real-world value in the information or skills being gained (Knowles, 1975, 1980). The learner's self-actualization within a given environment is foundational to the humanistic philosophy (Maslow, 1976). Self-actualization is foundational as it is the conceptual link between learners and their practical application of skills and knowledge within a given setting. Simply stated each person must first be a person before they are a specific person (Maslow).

The role of the teacher in the humanistic philosophy is to be a resource for the learner (Elias & Merriam, 1995). This resource could generate the learning, provide depth to reflection or facilitate the application of the learner's choice. Educators are a source of disorientation with powerful questions and requests for alternate perceptions (Taylor, 2000). Powerful questions may catalyze learners to evaluate their perspective on a given subject, including self, and thus move closer to a state of self-actualization. Educators may also help in establishing a sense of balance and center within the learner or the learning environment. This sense of balance aids in the learning process for adults by establishing a safe environment (Knowles, 1975, 1980).

The role of learners in the humanistic philosophy is to understand and appreciate who they are while choosing and applying new learning to move closer to who they aspire to be (Elias & Merriam, 1995). Learners are responsible reflecting on the question of self and for being open to partnering with a teacher (Maslow, 1976; Rogers, 1969). They are responsible for directing their learning and for connecting its application to their

environment (Grow, 1991, 1994; Knowles, 1975, 1980; Tough, 1971). Learners also have the responsibility for understanding they are accountable for making the choice of the application of their learning, for self and environment, and must own the results, whether intended or not. They must also realize and utilize the benefits established with the teacher in the learning process.

The humanistic philosophy is rooted in the learning of all aspects of learners and in the basic freedom and integrity of the learners (Elias & Merriam, 1995). This process culminates in the self-actualization of each learner (Maslow, 1976; Rogers, 1969). The student-centered focus of this theory places the journey towards self-actualization at the forefront and highlights the partnering role of the educator in the process. The following section provides a deeper distinction of one of the theories rooted in the humanistic philosophy, transformational learning.

#### Transformational Learning

The theory of transformational learning is rooted in the belief that true learning is catalyzed by a disorienting event and is realized through the conscious reflection of the assumptions surrounding the learner's beliefs, feelings and actions (Cranton, 2000, 2006; Daloz, 2000; Dirkx, 1997; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow 1991, 2000; Taylor, 1986). In general, transformational learning requires an increased focus on reflective and critical thinking compounded with a willingness to be open to and accepting of the perspectives of others. This theory truly emphasizes the importance of the learning journey and is not simply focused on an endpoint result (Cranton, 2006).

A disorienting event occurs when individuals experience something that does not fit with their existing perspective and cannot be made functional through an immediate

increase in skills or knowledge based on their current paradigm (Taylor, 1986; Taylor, 2000). This event can be as extreme as the death of a loved one or as subtle as a passing conversation. Either way there is a discrepancy between the expectations of the individual and his/her actual experience (Taylor, 1986). The result of the event is that it causes individuals to critically reflect on their current assumptions (Cranton, 2006; Merizow 1991). This critical reflection has the potential of being extremely uncomfortable for the learner, and can sometimes act as a stimulus to explore new possibilities. The potential discomfort is rooted in the requirement that the reflection transcends cognitive thinking and includes a reflection on feelings and emotions (Taylor, 1997).

Seeking the input of others within the context of transformative learning generally follows critical reflection and a need for change (Cranton, 2006; Daloz, 2000; Dirkx, 1997; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow 1991, 2000; Taylor 1997, 2000). The purpose of seeking the input of others is to explore the disorienting event from multiple perspectives (Taylor, 1986). This component of the learning process is dependent on the learner being open to and willing to accept multiple answers. Once learners have several options within their grasp, they can reframe their current thinking by consciously choosing and applying their new paradigm. The choice and application sometimes requires the support of like-minded individuals or a supportive environment (Taylor, 1997).

### *Disorientation*

The extent that each learner reacts to a disorienting event is dependent on four determinants. These determinants are the content of the trigger, the state of the learner, the circumstances surrounding the trigger and the psychological preferences of the

learner (Cohen & Piper, 2000; Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). The reaction to these determinants will underscore the magnitude and rate the transformational process will proceed. Sudden and dramatic transformational learning is labeled epochal, or momentous, while transformational learning over time is labeled incremental or gradual (Mezirow, 2000).

The content of the trigger and the state of the learner are at the forefront of the disorientation. The content of the trigger could be traumatic or subtle, positive or negative or internal or external (Cohen & Piper, 2000; Cranton, 2006, Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Learners may be internally stressed or relaxed, and this may determine how they respond to the disorientation. Additionally, environmental determinants such the weather, the economy or friend (Covey, 1989) impact the responses to a given trigger.

Cranton (2006) stresses that the psychological preferences of learners also play a role in the process. The psychological preferences have three continuums. The first is bracketed with introversion or extroversion. Introverted learners see self as being the focal point as opposed to the external world (Cranton, 2006; Jung, 1971). Introverted learners relate their experiences to how the experience makes them feel. For example, introverted learners will respond to something they read by explaining how the literature makes them feel. "This book reminds me of a happy time in my childhood." Extraverted learners see the external world as being the focal point (Cranton; Jung). For example, "This book is exciting." These psychological preferences aid in understanding how learners will react to specific triggers. Introverted learners have a greater probability to be disoriented through content that they internalize. In the example above, the disorientation of the introverted learner is rooted in how it makes him/her feel.

Extraverts have a greater probability of disorientation driven by environmental determinants as they are more apt to be stimulated from the environment. Examples of this include the activities associated with sporting events, family issues or a heated conversation.

The second continuum is that of thinking and feeling (Cohen & Piper, 2000; Cranton, 2006, Mezirow, 1991, 2000). The thinking end of the continuum is anchored through the process of decision making via logic. The feeling end is anchored through decision making via values. Learners that reside towards the thinking end of the continuum have a greater probability of being disoriented by facts. Examples of facts include statistics, referenced literature, survey results or scientifically proven theories. Learners toward the feeling end are more likely disoriented when they encounter lack of harmony in what they experience. Examples of feelings include mood, emotional response and feelings.

The third continuum is bracketed by sensing and intuition (Cranton, 2006). Learners that prefer sensing rely on what they see, hear, smell or touch to interpret a given event. Learners that rely on intuition call on imagination and hunches to interpret a given event. Intuitive learners are more likely disoriented through further exploration of existing events. Learners that prefer sensing will more likely be disoriented through the interaction with the event itself.

Disorienting events are underscored with four determinants. Each learner has a unique response to any given combination of these determinants. This response is more likely to be predicted through a better understanding of the psychological preferences of



the learner (Cranton, 2006). The disorientation and the learners' response will potentially catalyze critical reflection (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow 2000; Taylor, 1986).

### *Critical Reflection*

Critical reflection is the process of evaluating values, assumptions and perspectives within the world (Cranton, 2006). Furthermore, critical reflection transcends cognitive elements, and includes components such as feelings and spirituality (Taylor, 1997). The dichotomy of critical reflection is dependent on your psychological preferences related to being introverted or extraverted. Extraverted learners have a greater ease and affinity for reflecting on the world around them (Cranton, 2006). Introverted learners find the same comfort with reflecting on their values and assumptions (Cranton, 2006). Regardless, critical reflection involves the intersection of self with environment, and requires social validation within the theory of transformational learning (Cranton, 2006; Daloz, 2000; Dirkx, 1997; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow 1991, 2000; Taylor 1997, 2000).

### *Social Validation*

Establishing relationships with others and engaging in dialogue are essential to transformational learning (Taylor, 1997, 2007). The fundamental element of relationship building is trust (Brookfield, 1990; Clark, 2001). Stephen Covey (1989) defines the two elements of trust as character and competence. The parties in a given relationship must be able to gauge the integrity and maturity of others within a specific relationship. They must also be able to gain an appreciation for the other parties in the relationship having knowledge or ability with respect to a given topic. Social validation occurs through the interactions within relationships built on trust (Baumgartner, 2001).

This relationship is used to validate the learning associated with the disorientation and critical reflection (Mezirow, 2000). The validation involves discussing the new perspectives and seeking consensus. If the new perspective is validated then learners must choose how and when to apply it to their worldview (Baumgartner, 2001). If the new perspective is not validated then learners are faced with another disorienting event (Mezirow, 1991, 2000).

### *Critiques of Transformational Learning*

Two challenges have been posed with respect to transformational learning. The first challenge to the theory of transformational learning is rooted in an ethical question. “What right do instructors have to encourage transformational learning (Baumgartner, 2001, p. 21)?” The secondary concern for the theory is in the general nature of the critical reflection (Brookfield, 2000).

It is important to realize and remember that emotions are involved in transformational learning (Baumgartner, 2001). This understanding will help educators better define and accept responsibility for their role within the transformational learning process. This is most critical within the planning of a transformational learning experience. The educator must also understand they may play a role in the triggering event, but may also be called upon for social validation through a relationship built on trust.

Additionally, the critical reflection of the learner within Mezirow’s (1991) theory allows for broad and relatively unfocused reflection. Brookfield (2000) challenges this by narrowing the focus of the critical reflection to being more implicit in nature. This

change would challenge the use of ideological critiques as a function of transformational learning.

The theory of transformational learning is triggered through a disorienting event, and the trigger to this event is unique to each learner in each situation (Cranton 2006; Mezirow, 1991). The disorientation is followed by critical reflection and social validation (Cranton 2006; Mezirow, 1991). Marathon running holds the potential for transformational learning to be associated with it. It provides multiple opportunities to trigger or catalyze disorientation. This disorientation may catalyze learning in multiple domains. The following section will expand on the different domains of learning.

#### Domains of Learning

The transformational learning process can evoke learning in several dimensions. Learning can be physical (somatic), emotional, and spiritual or some combination thereof (Brooks, 2001). Researchers have studied all of the previously stated dimensions and their relationship to transformational learning (Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 1997; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 1991). The research demonstrated the theory is applicable in all, and that the key was the event that triggers the transformative process.

#### *Somatic Learning*

Somatic learning or learning from and with the body is something all beings do intrinsically (Heckler, 1997). This learning process may or may not be intentional or conscious, and is not tangible until the individual can put language to it (Clark, 2001). The foundation of somatic learning is that the emotions, language, perceptions and actions are all generated through an energetic field. When language is added to the

energetic field, the body is defined. Heckler (1997) states, “The body is the life we live” (p. xi).

Heckler (1997) advocates that each individual is connected to all others and the living world around them through the energetic field and the language surrounding them. Furthermore, the energetic field is expressed in different cycles of beginnings, endings and all things between. These cycles challenge each individual to trust the energetic field beyond the language contained within self and be an active part of the greater body of community, wisdom and being (Clark, 2001). The energetic field is constantly seeking both balance and disruption.

The body is most open to experience and learning when it establishes an authentic balance within the cycles of the energetic field (Millman, 1999). This state is labeled as center (Heckler, 1997). Arts such as Aikido, yoga and meditation actively use the language of the body to establish a balance between the energetic field and the individual. These centering activities empower the individual to experience the world around them and grow in self and community. Finding center is the key to the somatic experience. The process of centering can be intentional, but because the energetic field of self and community are continually seeking balance the process can occur by chance and within the unconscious (Heckler).

The common understanding of body is anchored in the physical domain. Heckler (1997) has stated that this is a fundamental challenge with the populations’ understanding of the body. Because the body is a part of a greater energetic field it has components in the emotional and spiritual domain, as well as the physical (Merriam, 2001). Finding the

center of the physical body is relatively easy, but finding center for emotions and spirit require an extremely high level of openness and self-awareness.

### *Emotional Intelligence*

The primal brain is rooted in the exploration of self. Scholars agree that the emotional intelligence of each individual is dependent on the person's level of self-awareness (Goleman, 2002; McCown, Jensen, Freedman & Rideout, 1996). McCown, et al. stress that emotional intelligence skills can be grouped into three areas. They are: knowing who you are today, choosing who you are going to be in the future and stating the noble purpose for this journey. Goleman chooses to group his views on emotional intelligence into four groups; Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management.

For each person to know who they are they must exhibit a high level of self-awareness. For both McCown, et al. (1996) and Goleman (2002), the key to greater knowledge and success is to first understand self. Goleman (2002) separates self into awareness and management, but nevertheless stresses the importance of an inside out approach. This first step of knowing self involves confidence, transparency, initiative and optimism. Furthermore, this step is rooted in more than conscious thought (Dirkx, 2001). The key to successful self-awareness is the ability to put words and acceptance around conscious thought and the emotional underpinnings.

McCown, et al's (1996) second stage of choosing who you are going to be requires a solid level of social awareness and relationship management. These two components complete Goleman's (2002) model of emotional intelligence. This stage includes skills such as empathy, service, inspiration and influence. This is the area where

the individual must embrace their role in their environment. Embracing their role allows them to accept their current state or choose to change or influence the greater environment.

McCown, et al. (1996) take an additional step by articulating that the union of self to the environment should have a greater purpose than for self-gains. Each individual has the potential to benefit, but the primary focus is for a greater good. Goleman (2002) includes a level of service in his fourth level, but establishes deeper context around the business application. The application of emotional intelligence to the components of successful leaders is an example of this contextual framework. Specifically, the leader's ability to demonstrate a high level of self-awareness and empathy in decision making is representative of the previously stated application. This is the one true fundamental difference between theories provided by Goleman and McCown, et al.

The emotional intelligence domain manifests in the theory of transformational learning through the intuitive and emotional sense of the learners' experiences (Dirkx, 1997). The struggle for meaning is an essential element in the critical reflection stage of transformational learning (Dirkx). This essential element is represented in the element of self-awareness within emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2002; McCown, et al., 1996). Dirkx (2000) also brings the role of the spiritual domain into perspective within the theory of transformational learning.

### *Spiritual*

Transformational education reflects a spiritual or soul-centered philosophy (Dirkx, 1997, 2001). The soul conscious nature of this domain is grounded in the idea of an archetype (Dirkx, 1997). Archetypes are literally defined as an original version of

something that can be copied. The roots of this word have a Greek origin. *Arche* is the Greek word representing the primal source and type means mark or imprint. The following is centered on the Jungian view that these primal imprints are biologically anchored into the unconscious (Campbell 1991).

The biological relationship with the unconscious establishes a tangible reference point to compare our new interactions with. The location of the archetypes in the unconscious insinuates that we may or may not be consciously aware of their existence, yet they greatly influence our perceptions and actions (Dirkx, 2001). Archetypes relate to our own perceptions and how we grasp, understand and walk in the world. This journey has many perceived peaks and valleys, and travels through a multitude of time and space (Campbell, 1991).

The presence of peaks and valleys in our lifelong journey can be explained by the composition of archetypes. Each archetype has a bipolar structure that represents the pure primal imprint and its shadow (Tisdell, 2000, 2008). When we perceive the world through the pure imprint things are good and we appear to be traveling at a peak in our journey. When we experience life through the shadow side of the archetype, things feel bad and result in low points along the path (Tisdell). We seldom function on either end of this continuum, but do have a tendency to fluctuate around a point along the continuum. This localized point is unique and dependent on the individual. Points on the continuum on either side of this natural balance stress the individual and inhibit growth, learning and the purity of the experience (Campbell, 1991).

The individualization of the focal point between the pure and shadow is not indicative of other aspects of archetypes. The presence of archetypes is not dependent on

sex, culture or even generation. This fundamental element of archetypes can be found throughout time in literature, stories, art, myth and religion within each culture's experience, yet evoking a universal experience (Dirkx, 1997). This implies that archetypes do not only reside within each person, but each person also resides within the archetype.

Carol Pearson, in *Awakening the Heroes Within* (1991), found at least five different ways to explain archetypes. She framed the explanations from the perspectives of spiritual seekers (monotheist and polytheist), academics, scientists, and people interested in human growth and development. I focused on her definition using the human growth lens as it provides context for the learning being researched. She wrote "people interested in human growth view archetypes as guides on our journeys. Each archetype that comes into our lives brings with it a task, a lesson and ultimately a gift. The archetypes together teach us how to live" (p. 7).

This definition of archetypes sheds light on the thought that each person resides within archetypes and the converse. This explanation implies that each person has full human potential. This potential is not dependent on time, space, culture, race, gender or any other deterministic factor, but instead on the individual's journey. Pearson's (1991) definition also implies that learning is a fundamental component to perceiving life through the pure archetype. The archetype will present itself when appropriate; the person just needs to be open to it. A lack of openness will result in a perception localized on the shadow side of the continuum.

The relationship of transformational learning and Marathon running with respect to the different domains of learning is rooted in understanding self and then the



environment (Goleman, 2002). Within self, individuals can be centered or not. Being centered involves a balance in the different domains of the body, which include the physical, emotional and spiritual domains. The state of being centered empowers individuals to experience a greater energetic field, their environment (Heckler, 1997). The learning required to embrace these concepts involves finding center and being open to all experiences. Marathon running presents each participant with the opportunity to learn in each of these domains.

### Marathon

The Marathon received its name from the lore of the Greek battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. The Greeks won the battle and a herald named Philippides ran 26 miles to Athens to announce the victory over the Persian forces. The modern Marathon was first run in the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens (Lovett, 1997). The original course was 40 kilometers or 24.8 miles. The current distance of 42 kilometers or 26.2 miles was introduced at the 1908 Olympic Games in London, and was adapted as the official distance in 1921. Today, more than 800 Marathons are run internationally on an annual basis and the larger events draw tens of thousands of participants and millions of spectators.

#### *Motives for Completing a Marathon*

Daniels (2005) stated that “there are 4 keys to successful distance running – or for any other pursuit in life” (p. xv). These keys are inherent ability, opportunity, direction and motivation. Marathon runners come in all shapes and sizes, and have a varying amount of inherent ability that defines the upper limit their potential. The upper limit of potential includes how fast runners can go, how far they can go and how quickly they

recover from each run. It is up to each runner how much of his or her potential they live up to (Daniels). With over 300 marathons offered in the United States alone, the opportunity to participate in one of these events is plentiful. In 2007, over 400,000 runners competed in marathons within the United States (Marathonguide, 2008). The average age of the Marathon runners in 2007 was 38.9 years and this group was comprised of 60.5% men and 39.5% women. Based on the data provided by Marathonguide.com, this is representative of races between 2001 and 2007. Running groups and training plans provided through books and the internet provide the needed direction for those who choose to confront the marathon. Daniels (2005) feels that this is the least significant of the “4 keys” to success. Finally, motivation is the final key to success.

Each year hundreds of thousands of marathon runners are motivated to participate. The motivations for each participant to train for and run a marathon vary based on individual differences (Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007). The individual differences manifest in four key motivators: health, personal achievement, psychological factors and social factors (Masters, Ogles, Jolton, 1993).

Some of the factors that underscore health as a motivation for marathon runners include both physical and mental benefits (Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007). The physical motivators include weight loss and general increase in fitness (Ogles & Masters, 2003). The mental motivators include stress reduction. In each distinction the marathon runner is motivated by increased health benefits.

Personal achievement is also a potential motivation for marathon runners. Whether the runner is simply trying to cross the finish line or complete the race in a

designated time, achievement is a motivating factor. Competition exists both within and between marathon runners (Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007). Runners may choose to compete with each other or to compete with their results from previous races.

The psychological motivators for marathon runners include increased self-esteem, finding life meaning and a level of psychological coping (O'Connor, 2007). Research has shown that a relationship exists between running and endorphins and neurotransmitters (Raglin 2007). Running causes an increase in both endorphins and neurotransmitters. This physiological description provides insight to the increase of self-esteem and level of physical coping. The time associated with preparing for a marathon and the potential for reflection lays the foundation for the pursuit of life's meaning.

The marathon runners that are motivated by social factors are generally either driven by social recognition or affiliation (Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007). For those persistent enough to complete the marathon, it becomes a piece of their personal identify. Marathon runners identify themselves as part of the running community by wearing commemorative items from a race like they were a badge of courage and take great joy in each and every step they take along the journey (Cooper, 1998). The journey is filled with both physical and psychological challenges.

#### *Physical Challenge of the Marathon*

Much of the information written about running marathons includes the training, the nutrition, the water consumption and the activity after the marathon (Billat, 2001; Cheuvront, Montain & Sawka, 2007; Dawson, Dawson, Tildus, 2004; Kenefick, Chefick & Sawka, 2007). Completing a marathon requires many choices. Some as fundamental as choosing a training plan and running the required miles to planning speed sessions and

location for long runs (Bingham, 2002). As a marathon runner, I understand that one of the hardest choices a runner makes is literally taking the first step of each run. I also understand that leaving a comfortable house to run is a tough choice, but also could be one of the most rewarding.

Marathon training varies. It is generally between 12 and 18 weeks (Bingham, 2002). This training period includes running from 3-7 days a week. The weekly running mileage depends on the runner, their goals, their fitness level and the time they have to dedicate to running (Daniels, 2005). Runs are either based on distance or time. The training runs range from 1 mile to 24 miles and set running times also have a relatively broad range that last anywhere from 5 minutes to 4 hours. The time and energy dedicated to marathon running places additional nutritional stresses on the body.

Bastone (2007) notes iron, calcium, and vitamin E to be important aspects in a runner's diet. She mentions these nutrients are best obtained through food than by taking supplements. If an individual's iron level is low, he/she will feel fatigued. Without the appropriate amount of calcium, the body will borrow calcium from the bones and the bone strength will decrease which would be a huge problem for a runner. Vitamin E is an antioxidant which helps cells in the body to stay strong. Fluid consumption is also important for the runner (Noakes, 2003).

The Association of International Marathons (AIMS) points out that drinking as much as tolerable is not the answer. This has been a concept which has been pushed since the 1960s (Noakes, 2003). However, AIMS has conducted studies which provide information stating the amount of fluids ingested depend on several factors which include: the type of runner, which means if the runner is a slow or fast runner; the

weather in which the runner is running; and the metabolic rate of the individual (Noakes). The more energy the runner exerts or the warmer the weather, an increased amount of fluid is required. Not only is the fluid replacement an important aspect, but also the running attire.

Sneakers should be worn for at least 2 – 3 weeks before the marathon. This decreases the chance of blisters and pain during the marathon. Clothing worn during the marathon should be the same as which the individual runs in during the training (Runners Guide, 2006/2007). New clothing may cause chafing and then cause pain during the marathon. Pain during a marathon is almost certain, but the extent afterwards requires consideration. The consideration includes the severity of the pain, the physiological location and previous experience with similar pain.

One of the last reminders Bingham and Hadfield (2003) mention is to listen to your body after the marathon. Your body will tell you if more rest is needed by aching more than usual or feeling more fatigued than usual. Your body may also be ready to begin training for the next race. Another method to view this state is to better understand the psychology of a marathon runner.

#### *Psychology of the Marathon Runner*

The psychology of marathon runners is driven by two main characteristics. The first is that they, as a group, are more extraverted and have better mental health than non-athletes (Raglin, 2007). The second is that they are extremely individualistic (Raglin). These characteristics provide insight into how the psychology affects the performance of marathon runners.

The extraverted nature and increased level of mental health among marathon runners has two positive relationships with the activity (Raglin, 2007). The first is that they aid the marathon runner in coping with the physical challenges associated with completing the race. In addition, this could also enhance the runner's ability to benefit from additional stressors that marathon running provides. Simply stated, this characteristic not only increases the potential to cope with the stressors of marathon running, but also benefit from the stress. Examples of the stressors of marathon running include the time required to train for the race, the pressure of an established time goal and the fear of race-day weather. The stressors could potentially trigger a disorienting event and the beginning of transformational learning.

The potential benefit from disorientation is also indicative of the individual nature of marathon runners. The disorientation could occur as a result of the individual's response to negative emotions associated with the marathon (Raglan, 2007). Negative emotions can be caused by poor performance, increased pain or any numerous events associated with running 26.2 miles with thousands of other runners and spectators. Negative emotions generally harm performance, but may benefit the marathon runner. This characteristic also provides a link to the self-directed nature of the adult learner (Merriam, 2001).

Some institutions of higher education, such as Truman State University in Missouri, have begun to teach marathon running as part of their curricula. With the exception of a few colleges and universities providing courses on running a marathon, the phenomenon being studied in this research is not set in a formal setting. With this in

mind, gaining perspective on informal and incidental learning will help in framing the data and results of this study.

The persistence required dedicating 3 to 7 days a week for 12 to 18 weeks to train for a marathon is essential. Running in extreme heat or cold simply to cross a finish line separates the average person from a marathoner. Whatever the motivation may be, marathon runners dedicate a sizable amount of time and energy into the preparation and completion of the event. The internal motivation and self-direction associated with this motivation link the marathon runner to adult learning. The opportunity along this journey for disorientation, reflection and social validation provide the opportunity for each runner to encounter, explore and perhaps appreciate transformational learning.

#### Chapter Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter was intended to put contextual framework around the potential transformational learning associated with training for and completing a marathon. Establishing the foundational elements of adult learning, the humanistic philosophy and the different settings it occurs opens the doors for the potential learning through the informal setting of marathon running. The details on transformational learning, its components and the marathon attempted to demonstrate that a potential link exists between the theory and the events surrounding marathon running. These links were highlighted in the transformational components of disorientation, critical reflection and social validation. Somatic learning, emotional intelligence and spirituality are components of the domains of learning. Transformational learning may be manifested as a result of participating in a marathon.

The next chapter outlines the methodology for the study.

### Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this research study is to determine if transformational learning is an outcome of the experiences of training and completing a marathon. The physical and mental stresses that accompany this task provide the participants the opportunity to experience some level of disorientation and potentially challenge some of their existing paradigms. The primary research question being explored in this study is: What is the transformational experience of participants training for and completing a marathon? This question is intended to detect the presence of transformational learning throughout the process. Secondary questions within the study are intended to provide a richer framework to view, if any, the transformational learning in this study. These questions include:

1. What experiences catalyze the transformation of the adult learner who trains for and completes a marathon?
2. What domains of learning is the transformation associated with?

The remainder of this chapter will provide insight into the overall design of the study, the participants, methods of data collection and analysis as well as limitations of the study.

#### Research Design

The overall design of this study is what Merriam (1998) describes as a “phenomenological case study” (p. 15). Phenomenology studies the essence of an experience, like the experience of training for and completing a marathon. The participants themselves do not experience this essence nor provide a structure for what they experience; rather, the essence is filtered out by the researcher through reflection and interpretation of what the participants see, hear, and feel (Moustakas, 1994). The foundational element of a case study is to explicitly define the object of study (Merriam).



Since the research was bounded by elements such as a specific race, with a defined time and participation in an identified running group, the objects of the study met the foundational elements of a case study. The intent of the study was to utilize the researcher's general grasp of the phenomenon, investigate the well defined objects and to provide an interpretation of the components and their essence (Merriam 1998; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Merriam & Simpson, 1995). The bounded system established by narrowing the focus of the study to a single phenomenon, within the context of an isolated event enabled the researcher to take a holistic view of the experiences related to training for and completing a marathon.

The intent was to study a specific instance of a phenomenon, but also provide a method to research a similar phenomenon in a different setting by identifying and using the underlying components of the experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This two-level approach was popularized by Giorgi (1985). The first descriptive level is established through open-ended questions and general observations (Giorgi). The second descriptive level includes a reflective analysis of the collected data along with the participants' description of the experience. The structures utilized for the second level process included disorienting events, transformational learning and domains of learning. The second level process provides the opportunity to use the study as an instrument to view similar bounded systems (Stake, 1995).

Another foundational element of a phenomenological case study is the subjectivity of the researcher. Subjectivity is the lens that all of the experiences will be interpreted through and is comprised of three sources (Moustakas, 1994). The three sources are sense, imagination and appreciation. Interpreting a phenomenon through

what is seen, heard, felt, smelled or tasted underscores the essence of sense. Imagination presents the interpretation through thought and reflection of possibilities, and appreciation captures a value placed on a given observation. The combination of these elements enabled the researcher to collect data, synthesize knowledge and consciously place the knowledge in a contextual framework (Kant, 1966).

As an eight-time marathon finisher, the researcher possesses both a general understanding of the process of training for and completing a marathon and an appreciation for the unique experience that each marathon holds. The researcher brought his subjectivity to the forefront in an effort to avoid unconscious suggestions with respect to the study (Peshkin, 1988). This was also intended to openly establish a method for the researcher to clarify his personal stakes in the experiences within the study (Peshkin). In addition to the previously stated rationale for the use of a phenomenological design for this study, the following is an explanation of why it does not fit into a descriptive case study or a heuristic case study.

This study does not fit the features that underscore the descriptive case study because the intent is not to provide a complete and literal account of the bounded system (Merriam 1998). The study is also not intended to exhaust all of the potential variables present through an exploratory process. Finally, the researcher is seeking to associate the data collected in the research to existing theories of adult learning, not provide thick descriptions in a theoretical vacuum.

This study does not fit the features that underscore the heuristic case study because the intent of the study is not centered on explaining the rationale for the learning associated with the phenomenon from the background to the justification for why it

occurred (Merriam 1998). The research is also not intended to discuss alternatives to the phenomenon, but instead focus on placing context around the phenomenon at hand.

The bounded system of participants training for and completing a specific marathon with a specific running group establishes a solid foundation for the methods associated with case studies. The potential instrumental nature of this bounded system also provides the opportunity to view and interpret similar systems, but not to attempt to generalize the findings to the population of marathon runners (Stake, 1995). For these reasons, this research used the methodologies associated with a phenomenological case study.

### Context

Berg (2007) emphasizes that the research question is the primary driver for selecting the appropriate site to conduct the intended research. In addition, he articulates the need for the setting to be accessible, contain a solid sampling of willing members of the target population and provide a level of safety for the researcher. The other key element in selecting the setting for the research study is practicality with respect to complexity and size (Berg 2007). Finally, the setting must provide a high level of safety for the researcher.

### Participants

The research question required that the setting include a population of marathon runners who were willing and able to describe their experiences. Since the purpose of this study is to gain perspective of a given phenomenon within a specific bounded system, a purposeful sampling strategy was utilized. A purposeful sample is a sample that provides the greatest probability to yield learning (Creswell, 2002; Merriam, 1997).

In addition, a randomized sample strategy was not appropriate for this research study. The reason for this includes the following. The size of the sample was anticipated to include four to six participants. The study lacks the need for normalized distribution of the core beliefs or characteristics of the subjects. Finally, there was a strong desire to ensure the sample contains subjects that have the skills needed to accurately describe their experiences (Marshall, 1996).

The participants for this study were selected using the following criteria:

1. Training with a specific running group.
2. Training for the 2009 Sunburst marathon.
3. Willing to participate in the study.
4. Have previously completed at least one marathon.

In an effort to gain access to subjects within the target population, I joined a local running club in Southern Illinois and collaborated with the owner of a local running store that trains potential marathon runners to compete in a specific race. The owner provides this service to the community free of charge. The owner agreed to grant me access to his trainees in return for my support in the training of these individuals. As an 8-time marathon finisher, he asked that I run with the group on a weekly basis. This fit with my desired role of participant observer in the design of this study. Table 1 includes the pseudonyms for the participants and their profile data

Table 1: Participant Profiles

Name	Age	Sex	Number of Previous Marathons	Occupation	Marital Status
Pre	33	Male	5	Detective for local police department	Married with three children
Dena	34	Female	6	Trainer for a pharmaceutical company	Single
Jimmy	64	Male	30+	Retired federal government employee and owner of a local running store	Divorced
Meb	35	Male	7	Broker/Owner for a real estate company	Married with no children

The Sunburst Marathon was held the first Saturday in June 2009 in South Bend, IN and corresponded with the reunion weekend activities for the University of Notre Dame. The inaugural race was held in 1984 and was affiliated with the local chapter of the American Lung Association. The goal of this race was to benefit the American Lung Association and the community of South Bend, IN. The race grew in popularity in the early 1990s and incorporated Memorial Hospital and a local radio station as major sponsors for the event. The race celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and expected over 7,000 participants for the weekend events. These events include the half (13.1 miles) and full

(26.2 miles) marathon. Race results posted on [marathon.com](http://marathon.com) showed that the 2009 Sunburst Marathon had 595 finishers. In all, 409 men and 186 females finished the race. The male winner finished in 2:34:06 and the female winner finished in 2:56:42. The average finish time for the marathon was 4:14:12.

### Data Collection

The research included three methods of data collection for this study; observations, semi-structured interviews and journaling. The observations were conducted from two perspectives. Data was collected from the perspective of a participant observer and the perspective of an etic observer. The balance of the two methods of observation provided two distinct perspectives on the participants and enabled the researcher to observe runners of varying speeds within a given training session. The field notes of the participant observer were digitally recorded and transcribed as soon after the observation as possible. This was to limit the potential of erosion or embellishment of data (Berg, 2007) and increase the reliability of the data. The recordings were destroyed after the data was transcribed. The etic observation was primarily utilized to observe the activities on the day of the race. The researcher was observing the participants at the beginning of the race and at the finish-line. The researcher attempted to observe the participants along the course, but only observed one of the participants between the start and finish of the race. The observation included physical attributes such as posture and hand position of the participants as well as their reactions to leading to the start of the race and the completion of the race. The observations were documented in the field with a digital recorder and transcribed as soon after the observation as possible.

The second method of data collection was two one-on-one semi-structured interviews that occurred prior to the race and after the race. The interviews were conducted to build rapport with the participant and provided a more secure environment to share content that might not be shared in a group setting. A semi-structured interview is rooted in a set of predetermined questions and topics (Berg, 2007). This data-gathering method was chosen for this study for two major reasons. The first is that the predetermined questions provided for a consistent set of terminology and language that provided a foundation for the data analysis (Berg). The second reason for a semi-structured interview was the flexibility it presents the researcher within a given interview (Leininger, 1985). This enabled the researcher to utilize his own interviewing talents and preferences. In addition, this flexibility established a more fluid interaction with the participants and highlighted the unique nature of their individual experiences. The pre-marathon interview aided the researcher in establishing the participants' expectations and previously learning associated with running a marathon. The post-marathon interview provided for a reflective account of the experiences of the process and targeted the research questions of this study (Moustakas, 1994). Similar to the field notes from the observations, the data were digitally recorded, transcribed and the audio destroyed upon transcription.

The following are the semi-structured interview questions utilized in this study.

#### Pre-Marathon One-On-One Interview Questions

1. What prompted you to decide to run a marathon?
2. What do you hope to achieve, accomplish or learn through this experience?
3. What effects do you think that this experience will have on your life in general?

4. What do you feel the most rewarding part of this experience will be?
5. What do you feel will be the most challenging part of this experience?
6. When you complete the race you hope to \_\_\_\_\_

Post-Marathon One-On-One Interview Questions (Targeted Research Question)

1. What did you achieve, accomplish and learn through your experience? (Primary)
2. How is this different from what you expected? (Primary)
3. What effect does this experience have on your life in general? (Primary)
4. What was the most rewarding part of your experience? (Secondary)
5. What was the most challenging part of your experience? (Secondary)
6. Now that I have completed a marathon, I hope to \_\_\_\_\_ (Primary)
7. What one lesson would you teach someone preparing for a marathon and why?  
(Primary)
8. What was the most significant moment of your experience? (Secondary)
9. Have you experienced any changes in yourself as a result of this experience? If so, how? (Primary and Secondary)

The third method of data collection is journaling. Each of the participants was asked to complete journal entries on a weekly basis. The journaling data was intended to ensure an active voice for each participant, and provide additional validity to the field notes and interview data. Journaling also provided the participants the opportunity to critically reflect on their experience (Clark, 1997; Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991). The process potentially enabled the participants to challenge their current assumptions while providing valuable data for the study (Cranton, 2006).



The electronic instrument that the journaling data was collected in is Web Biographies. This is a free tool located on the World Wide Web that provides both the security and visibility required in this study. Participants were able to password protect their entries and grant access to the researcher. The granted access provided the researcher with the ability to review the information contained in the journal as soon as they are posted. Each participant was also given the opportunity to keep a hard journal if they did not want to use the web tool. All of the participants utilized the web tool.

The participants were asked to journal on a weekly basis. The first journal entry focused on the following questions:

1. How is your training going to date?
2. Are you progressing like you planned to?
3. Has anything caused you to think differently about your running? Your family? Your job? Your . . .?
4. If you answered yes to the above, what did you do with the thought?

The goal is for each participant is to journal at least once a week, but more frequently is definitely preferred. These entries should focus on:

1. How was your training for this period?
2. What were the highlights? What were the challenges you had this period?
3. Has anything caused you to think differently about your running? Your Family? Your job? Your. . .?
4. If you answered yes to the above, what did you do with the thought?

The use of multiple methods of data collection provided greater validity to the study and aided in the analysis of the phenomenon. The process of ensuring a balance of

the voice of the participant, the researcher and the blending of the two were fundamental to accurately record the information associated with the study. This balance also enabled a rich description of the phenomenon.

### Data Analysis

The technique used to analyze the data in this research study was content analysis. This method for data analysis is generally associated with grounded theory (Stauss & Corbin, 1998). The differentiating principle between the techniques applied in this case study and pure grounded theory is the absence of an attempt to derive sustentative theory from the data. The research focused on the essence of the phenomenon and the relationship to an existing theory. The researcher analyzed the data for reoccurring properties and meaning within the field notes and interview transcripts in a line-by-line manner (Merriam, 1998). The major components of this type of analysis are to establish the rules for defining the units, identifying and linking the categories back to the research question and to provide criteria for validity (Mayring, 2000).

The rules that the researcher decided upon for the analysis of this data followed the parameters of a microanalysis, or blend of open and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding is a data analysis technique that requires the researcher to expand the inquiry of the data widely (Berg, 2007). This required the researcher to restrain from interpreting the data until all of the material was analyzed. The researcher applied the process of open coding independently on each of the field notes and transcripts. The researcher labeled the codes for the concepts that he identified in the material. An example of this resulted in the use of the labels of confidence, competitiveness, successful, motivated and miserable. This process enabled the researcher to identify the

concepts and their properties from his individual worldview, or manner he perceives the data based on his own experiences (Strauss & Corbin).

The researcher then applied the process of axial coding (Strauss & Corbin) and leveraged the information provided from the collected artifacts. Axial coding is the process of analysis that relates the properties identified through the open coding to a specific category. The axial coding element of this research included two tiers of categorization. The properties listed above were coded around the category of self-awareness. The initial categories were then furthered analyzed against broader categories. In the example provided, the sub-category of self-awareness was coded with the broader category of emotion along with other sub-categories including fulfillment, respect and perseverance. The end result of the content analysis was solid categories supported by an array of sub-categories and properties.

### Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of multiple researchers, sources of data or analysis methods to add validity to a given study (Merriam, 1998). The design of this study capitalized on member checks of the transcribed interviews, a second researcher's review of the analyzed data and multiple sources of data to add validity to the study. The participants were asked to review the interview transcripts at the completion of data collection. The researcher sent the transcripts to the participants electronically through email and resolved any issues identified through the process. The member checks were intended to ensure the researcher accurately captures the voice of the participants.

A second researcher reviewed interview transcripts, field notes and the journals to ensure the validity of the identified codes and categories. This does not demonstrate the

reliability of the analysis with other studies, but was instead intended to demonstrate the sub-categories from the data as a function of patterns of reoccurrence. The multiple sources of data include three methods for data collection, the use of journaling to mediate researcher bias and two separate observation techniques to add depth to the field notes.

The three methods for collecting data included: interviews, observations and participant journals. Each of these three provided a different researcher-subject interaction and provided multiple perspectives with respect to the phenomenon of interest. The interviews and participant-observer interaction enabled an immediate blending of the voices of the subjects and the researcher. The etic observations enabled the researcher to capture data through his lens and apply it against his experience with the phenomenon. The journal removed the voice of the researcher and allowed the participants the opportunity to record their experiences in their own words. The participants' voices were presented in the form of vignettes in subsequent chapters. The combination of these perspectives provided the opportunity to compare and contrast the data and add a greater level of validity to the study.

### Bracketing

As an experienced marathon runner, the researcher was both aware of his subjectivity and cognizant of the wealth of insight he brought to this study. The design of this study had elements built in to accomplish both.

The use of journaling as a method of data collection provides a description of the phenomenon being studied through the direct voice of the subject (Lukinsky, 1990). This aided the researcher in identifying his biases. In addition, this data provided information prompting the researcher to avoid jumping to conclusions based solely on

his beliefs surrounding the phenomenon. Identifying these biases enabled the researcher to include his knowledge and experience in marathon running in the study.

The experience of the researcher was captured through his role as an etic observer and in the process of data analysis. Through observation, the voice of the researcher was captured through the use of field notes. The details captured in this process provided the researcher the opportunity to present tangible evidence of the events being captured based on his experience. The ability to place the data into context also aided the researcher in analyzing the data.

Acknowledging the potential biases and building on the experience of the researcher were keys to the success of this study. The methods utilized in this study provided the opportunity for both. The researcher was able to clearly identify what he knows and believes about the phenomenon and was able to hold it separate from the data collected through the direct voice of the subject (Van Manen, 1990).

#### Limitations

Limitations of this study include the following. The study is focused on a subgroup of marathon runners that are associated with a specific running group. The study is isolated to one event so variables between events are not included in the study. A high level of self-reporting through journaling and interviewing was used in this study as opposed to objective standards.

#### Chapter Summary

The methods for this study are in alignment with an instrumental case study. The multiple methods for data collection enabled a greater level of validity in the research and aided the researcher in identifying and acknowledging his biases. The microanalysis of

the data provided for a thorough method for interpreting the data and linking it back to transformational learning. The methods and analysis provided an instrument for similar research of related bounded systems.

The following chapter will present the details of the content analysis of the data collected using the methodologies described in this chapter.

## Chapter 4: Content Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to present the details of the content analysis conducted on the data contained in the interviews, observations, and journals described in Chapter 3. The results of the content analysis were derived through a blend of open and axial coding and the results were captured in the list of codes located in Appendix A. The results of the content analysis of the data yielded four categories: Social, Emotional, Physical and Environmental. Details of the categories are introduced consecutively in the current chapter and related codes are presented in this chapter through the use of vignettes from the data captured through the pre-race interviews, journals, observations and post-race interviews.

### Social

*“The world has narrowed to a neighborhood before it has broadened to a brotherhood.” ~ Lyndon B. Johnson*

The above quote from Lyndon Johnson provides a foundation for the stage of the social category that emerged through the content analysis of the data. The simplicity of the quote demonstrates how relationships, support and community ground the social backdrop of any group. The social category is rooted in three key codes: relationship, support and community. Table 2 provides the definitions of the previously stated codes.

Table 2: Social Category

Sub-Category	Definition	Properties
Relationship	A mutual sense of accountability between individuals or groups.	Father-in-law, Friends, Running Partner, Wife
Community	A sense of belonging to a larger body of common interest.	Running Group, Race Finishers
Support	An act intended to provide motivation, consolation or apathy.	Cheering, Waving, Words of Encouragement

### *Relationships*

The relationships that were described by the subjects varied in many dimensions. They varied in purpose, duration and in the catalyst for the relationship. Some of the relationships described were as short as couple miles of the race, like the following segment from Dena's journal:

*I chatted with a few runners along the course as we played leap frog, I even missed them when they didn't catch me on our leap frog game (Appendix C, 246-247).*

Others focused on expanding and building existing relationships, like described by Pre in the following segment from his pre-race interview:



*Another side rewarding thing is that Maura is running the half marathon. So it's another opportunity to share my running with her (Appendix B, 290-291).*

Regardless of the duration or depth of the relationship, each of the participants acknowledged that relationships played a part in their experiences in training for and completing a marathon.

### *Community*

The community that the participants referenced also varied in dimensions. The communities were as targeted as a specific running group to the community that includes all people who have completed a marathon and even all who consider themselves runners. The following vignette from Jimmy's pre-race interview presents an emic view of how he felt that he entered the running community.

*You have to define what it means to be a runner. I had a couple of plateaus. After a couple of years I got a good pair of running shoes. Then I thought, now I think I'm a runner. Then I ran with a couple of guys from work and they would talk about running... back then everything was a 10K race there were no 5ks. And I ran with a couple of guys that were always running 38 and 39 minute 10ks and I was running 42, 43, 44, and I thought man if I could ever break 40 minutes then I would be a runner. When I did, I finally decided that I was a runner.*

(Appendix B, 531-538)

I captured an etic view of the specific running group that all four of the participants belong to through my observation during the Run for Site in St. Louis on May 3, 2009.

*The group was cheerful and spent time catching up on each other's lives. The discussions ranged from vacations, work and family to the good and bad of their current running state. The young man the group was running for was walking around the circle of friends and greeting many of them. He was openly greeted and given the full attention of the members of the group that he was interacting with. Any conversation was paused and no one seemed worried about being rude or what the others would think. They simply stopped and picked the young man up and embraced him. As I watched more people enter the circle of friends, including Jimmy and Pre, the same welcome was extended to each of them. They did not pick these folks up, but they did hug or provide a high five to each person.*

(Appendix D, 139-148)

The sense of belonging to the running group was rooted in the common denominator of running, but the sense of community transcended training for or running a race as demonstrated above. The relationships and community also provide the opportunity for support.

### *Support*

I described support as an act intended to provide motivation, consolation or empathy. Motivation was as simple as waving to a fellow runner to re-entering a race course to help out a runner after completing the race. Meb's wife re-entered the course after finishing the half-marathon to support him. The empathy element of this code is best demonstrated through the following section from Pre's journal.

*I actually would rather see Meb come in under four hours than have me come in under 3:30. I know he has been working very hard and I know he will never say*

*it, but I think he is really trying to break 4 hours. Everyone but Meb himself knows he is capable of it* (Appendix C, 460-463).

In this segment Pre demonstrates the selfless nature that is foundational to the ability of truly being empathetic.

Dena also provided an example of support in the following segment of her post-race interview.

*She was there when I hit the wall. She told me I was looking good. She gave me a little pep* (E, 87-88).

She explained that in the latter portion of the race when she wasn't feeling her best, Meb's wife provided the above support. Something seemingly small provided Dena with a needed boost in morale.

The social theme surfaced in the pre-race interviews and was apparent throughout the remainder of the data. Elements of each of the codes were expressed by all of the participants in unique manners and will be furthered explored in the participants' descriptions later in this chapter. Additionally, the group demonstrated the root of the quote provided at the beginning of this section: they first became neighbors through their common interest in running and in some cases evolved into more of a brotherhood. The next section will provide details surrounding the emotional category and the associated codes.

### Emotional

*“How ridiculous is Caesar and Bonaparte wandering from one extreme of civilization to the other trying to conquer men – himself, the while, unconquered, unexplored, almost wholly unsuspected to himself.” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

The above quote provides the essence of the emotional category. The essence is that before someone can be socially aware and choose to interact with others they must first know who they are (McCown, Jensen, Freedman, & Rideout, 1996). The emotional category is comprised of four sub-categories: fulfillment, respect, perseverance and self-awareness. Table 3 provides the definitions of the previously stated sub-categories.

Table 3: Emotional Category

Sub-Category	Definition	Properties
Fulfillment	The feeling of joy, accomplishment or enthusiasm.	Satisfaction with Experience, Accomplishment of Desired Time, Personal Achievement
Respect	A demonstration of admiration, understanding or appreciation.	Admiration for Runners, Understanding for Challenges, Respect for Training and Race Distance
Perseverance	Making a conscience choice to overcome obstacles and challenges to achieve a goal	Committed, Goal Oriented, Journey, Determination
Self-awareness	An understanding of self in the context of given surroundings.	Confidence, Competitive, Successful, Motivated, Miserable

The data collected in the course of this research provided several examples of experiences that entailed these sub-categories. These sub-categories centered on the

subjects' thoughts and feelings with respect to their experiences. These thoughts and feelings range from a joy that could not be described in words, as described in the following segment from Pre's journal, to the ability to identify a motivating voice within that establishes a sense of fulfillment as demonstrated in the following segment from Meb's post-race interview.

*Pre: As I crossed the line, I staggered to the water tent and then to the food/popsicle tent. I felt horrible. I was not walking straight and I thought I might fall. As I walked through the crowd, I couldn't help but feel that strong sense of accomplishment come over me. It was like waves of emotion just kept pouring over me. It felt just like after my first marathon. I was overcome with emotion and I couldn't believe that I had done it. It almost made me cry many times. I don't know how to describe it in words but it is a great feeling. One I have only felt after finishing a marathon. Maybe this is why I love it so much.*  
(Appendix C, 621-628)

*Meb: I did not have a good time, but there is something that you get from that distance, whether it is a good day or bad day, that you don't get from anything else. At least I don't* (Appendix E, 218-220).

The emotional element of training for and completing a marathon was prevalent through the course of the content analysis.

### *Fulfillment*

One of the sub-categories that emerged was fulfillment. As demonstrated in Meb's vignette above, the completion of the race brings about a high level of satisfaction.

Additionally, elements of fulfillment were found outside of the actual race. An example of this is from Jimmy's pre-race interview.

*That's one of the reasons I (am) lucky to have this store, there are tons of people who come in and talk with me about the preparation, what they should be doing, what they shouldn't be doing and then the real satisfaction of them coming back here after the race. Going over their experiences what they should have done, what they did do, what I told them what to expect. I had a girl come in here last week and she did the half. She was so excited, she had her medal on. She just showed up and said 'Thanks'. She held up her medal and said see, I did it. I've had people, especially Team in Training, who come to the store and talk about their experiences before they even went home to their family. (Appendix B, 569-576)*

In the above, Jimmy is describing the satisfaction he gains from customers of his store coming in to thank him for his help in the preparations for their races. He also mentioned his participation in Team in Training.

Team in Training is a subsidiary of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The group trains participants to complete marathons, half-marathons and triathlons in return for raising money for the society. Jimmy has been a volunteer coach with the society on numerous occasions. The balance of personal achievement and extrinsically driven satisfaction define the extremes of this theme.

### *Respect*

The analysis of the data also surfaced an underlying theme of respect. The participants made reference to respecting themselves, other runners, the course and the

privilege to train for and complete a marathon. For example, Pre noted in his post-race interview:

*That directly reflects the fact that you have to respect the distance and respect the training. I always respect the distance and I respect the training however, sometimes life gets in the way (Appendix E, 284-287).*

I observed another example as the group was running and joking with each other. They were collectively making jokes surrounding Jimmy's age and then the number of marathons he has completed surfaced. The group was noticeably quiet for a few moments. I wondered if they were at a loss for words or were simply paying Jimmy a little respect. They acknowledged the accomplishment, and then proceeded back with their conversation.

The theme of respect was not necessarily fueled by setting records or the throws of competition, but instead by an overwhelming sense of acceptance and celebration of the spirit of the event and the appreciation of the individuals who choose to undertake it. In his journal Pre wrote the following about Meb:

*Meb didn't turn out so well. He came in way later at 5:45 or so. That sucked but he showed a lot of determination in finishing. Meb may give up in his mind but he always finishes. There is a lot to be said about that (Appendix C, 643-645).*

This simple display of respect illustrates that the admiration these individuals have for each other and the marathon is rooted in something greater than a clock. These results also demonstrate the inner strength that the participants displayed during the research.

### *Perseverance*

Perseverance was also a code that each of the participants displayed. Each of them very clearly stated their goals with respect to their training and the race. The following are examples of the goals provided by each of the participants in their pre-race interviews.

*Dena: I'd love to PR [Personal record], but I'm going to be realistic. I'd love to come in at about 4:45. That's a good distance between what I have been coming in at. . . That's about 5 hours (Appendix B, 28-30).*

*Jimmy: I want to finish in one.. in good shape so we can get up and have a party afterward (Appendix B, 410-411).*

*Meb: I'm hoping that this will give me my confidence back to continue to do more of these again (Appendix B, 216-217).*

*Pre: Um, I ultimately, if everything goes as planned I would like to PR. I would like to get a personal record. Right now my PR is 3:34. I would really like to run under 3 hours and 30 minutes for the marathon (Appendix B, 270-272).*

Even though the goals that each of the participants were striving for differed their resolve and willingness to confront challenges was shared amongst the group.

This resolve was highlighted in the participants' journals. The challenges were as simple as lacking the desire to complete a training run to the many curves that careers and family threw at the participants. Dena wrote about how her career presented challenges in getting her training runs in, and how she overcame it.

*Then work got busy, very very busy. . . I don't remember ever being this busy at work or working this much for this long of period. . .stupid work. . .when I get*



*home all I want to do is sit in my safety zone the Lazyboy. All is good there. I must keep going to the park for runs after work before going home. I have been running on average 4 days a week when I know I should be running 5 which has me freaking out a bit. (Appendix C, 8-13)*

In each case, the participants chose how to address each of the challenges and openly accepted the repercussions of their choices (Covey, 1989). The best example of this is found in the following vignette from Pre's journal.

*Sometimes you have to make that trade off. I'm not a professional runner, so I have to learn that some things are more important than running. Sometimes running is more important. I've come to accept that (Appendix C, 372-374).*

The perseverance was also noted several times in the researcher observations. In the first example, Pre was discussing how activities the night prior to a long training run present challenges. He discussed how his Friday evening activities and the quantity of Margaritas that he consumed were making the run a little more challenging. Another example presented itself while on a run with Meb on May 23, 2009. This run was interrupted due to lightening and finished by running up and down a nature trail during heavy rain. In both examples, the participants chose to overcome the obstacles and pursue their goals.

Pursuing goals and overcoming obstacles requires an increased sense of self that is prevalent in training for and completing a marathon. Each of the participants demonstrated a strong sense of self-awareness throughout the research. The demonstrated level of self-awareness was anchored in confidence. As previously stated,

Meb was pursuing confidence as a goal for the race. Additionally, Pre and Dena provided details of how confidence resonated with them.

*Pre: If I am going to run a fast marathon, I feel like I have to be able to run a fast 5k. I would say this Sunday was a confidence boost for my training (Appendix C, 409-411).*

*Dena: I would love to get confident for the big 20 miler this weekend but weekend but you never know what's going to happen (Appendix C, 55-57).*

Confidence underscored this theme, but other dimensions of self-awareness also played a key role in shaping the theme.

Each of the participants identified who they were as runners, workers, fathers, friends, daughters and humans. Dena provides an example of this in her journal.

*I'm going to wear a watch, I'm human (Appendix C, 238).*

In this brief statement Dena demonstrates an understanding of who she is in the moment. The sub-categories that define the emotional category are closely linked to the physical category as the codes that support it are primary drivers in the application of the emotional codes. The next section of this chapter will explore the physical category.

## Physical

*“Pain was not given thee merely to be miserable; learn from it, turn it in to account.”  
~ Thomas Carlyle*

The physical demands and challenges that manifested during the training and completion of a marathon were extremely apparent during the analysis of the data collected through the research. The physical category was defined by two key sub-categories: pain and fatigue. Table 4 outlines the definitions and examples of each of these sub-categories.

Table 4: Physical Category

Sub-Category	Definition	Properties
Pain	Physical discomfort that relates to the activity.	Sore knee, Plantar Fasciitis
Fatigue	Depletion of physical ability as a result of sustained activity.	Heavy Legs, Tired, Walking, Low Energy

*Pain*

The pain related to training for and completing a marathon varied in magnitude and duration. Jimmy described the impact that his knee pain had on his preparation in his journal.

*Didn't do speedwork in the morning. . .ran 3-800s at night with Pre. . .knee still hurting but not too bad that it would stop me from running (Appendix C, 692-694)!*

*Another easy day of 5 miles. . .knee is still there but not as bad. . .really busy at store. . .so that means more up and down which isn't good for the knee (Appendix C, 696-698)!*

*Ran with Meb in O'Fallon. . .easy but hard up the hills. . .went 5 miles. . .did a lot of work on the yard and worn my strap when I was cutting the grass. . .first time for that (Appendix C, 700-703)!!*

Dena provided another example of pain in her journal.

*Man my feet hurt, this PF[Plantar Fasciitis] sucks! Will they hold out for 7 weeks. . . should I trying running in AM before work and dress shoes, switch to a different brand of running shoes???? (Appendix C, 16-18)*

Pre and Meb also experienced pain as demonstrated in their journals.

*Pre: As the race weathered on, my splits went into the 9's and then 10 minute mile range. I walked through water stops and even walked in the middle of a mile one time hoping my legs would feel better. I started to feel my left quad cramp and my left calf cramp. (Appendix C, 588-590)*

*Meb: I stopped, literally stopped. I should say that my legs stopped, refused to go, calf muscles had other plans and apparently it involved providing me with brilliant searing pain. I have had cramps before but this time was different. Had there been a sharp instrument of any kind becoming a double amputee would have been a no brainer. (Appendix C, 332-336)*

The participants each provided specific examples of the pain they encountered and also provided a clear distinction between pain and the second code that defines this category, fatigue.

### *Fatigue*

The element of fatigue emerged in the post-race interviews and in my observations. Small things like how the participants were hanging their heads, clinching their fist or even leaning were signs of the onslaught of fatigue. Pre provided some details of this in his journal.

*As these last few miles went on, I came to the realization that 3:30 was not in me today. I just didn't physically have it in me. Every time I tried to speed up, my legs would cramp and my breathing would get more labored. I only felt good when I stopped and walked. By this time, the sun was high and it was getting warmer but that wasn't the reason for my meltdown. The marathon got me, not the weather. The marathon is a sick demented beast and it chewed me up and was about ready to spit me to the curb. (Appendix C, 591-597)*

The toll of the marathon and its training was also documented in the course of the researcher observation. I observed Pre entering the stadium and approaching the finish line. His family began to cheer as he came out of the tunnel. He looked exhausted. His fist were tight and his head looking towards the turf. I also observed Dena.

Dena's hands were a little tenser, but her head was held high and she surveyed the stadium as she approached the finish-line. The tenseness in her hands was apparent by her clinched fist. Meb's fatigue was also apparent through a similar characteristic in his

fist. Additionally he was leaning to the right and slumped over. His head was looking directly at the turf. He slowly jogged towards the finish-line.

The pain and fatigue challenged each of the participants, but they persevered towards their goals. The experience also provided some external challenges for each of the participants to overcome. The next section on environment presents some of the challenges.

### Environmental

*The best thing one can do when it's raining is to let it rain.  
~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

The environmental category represents many of the external determinants that faced the participants as they trained for and completed their marathon. These determinants included the excitement of experiencing a new location to the challenges that the weather presents. This category was defined by three sub-categories: course, destination and weather. Table 5 provides the contextual framework for the category and associated sub-categories.

Table 5: Environmental Category

Sub-Category	Definition	Properties
Course	Elements associated with the route utilized for a training run or race.	Hills, Crowds, Landmarks, Finish-line, Start-line
Destination	A geographic location associated with a race.	Disney, Chicago, Notre Dame, St. Louis, Boston

Weather	The combination of the Heat, Rain temperature, humidity, wind and cloud cover.
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### *Course*

The participants described elements of the physical terrain related to the path followed for a training run and race in their journals and interviews, and I observed many of these elements through my observations. One key element of the courses run during training and on race day is that of hills. Jimmy discussed this in his pre-race interview.

*So, and he says that there's hills, I just can't. . . the hills really don't bother me, but I'm thinking of the last time that I ran Boston the hills killed me, and I do not want to walk through any water stops... or walk on any hills (Appendix B, 466-468).*

The hills present a physical challenge to the participants as a result of the use of different muscle groups (Daniels, 2005).

There are additional attributes of the course. They include the start-line (Figure 1), finish-line (Figure 2), water stops (Figure 3) and mile markers (Figure 4).

**Figure 1: Start-line**



**Figure 2: Finish-line**



**Figure 3: Water Stop**





**Figure 4: Mile Marker**



Each one of the physical attributes of the course represented different challenges, emotions and meaning to each of the participants. Meb described his experience at specific mile markers in during his post-race interview.

*Ummm... the most challenging was mile 17 forward. And knowing I had to get all of the way back. Every step you took in one direction you knew you had to take back and it was hurting every step. By mile 19 I was done. I literally wasn't running or walking, I was leaning against a tree (Appendix E, 180-183).*

When asked by the researcher what the course was like at mile 19, Meb stated:

*Ummm. Actually, you were already coming back from the out and back. It was pretty nice. It was fairly flat, in a park. There were some trees there. It was a beautiful course. I'd run it again in a heartbeat (Appendix E, 185-187).*

Even though the participants viewed the array of physical elements on the course differently, each of them connected and related themselves to these elements. The second code in this category is more rooted in the specific sites related to the destination.

*Destination*

South Bend, Indiana, is without a doubt known for housing Notre Dame University, but the allure of this destination is not the only reference provided by the participants. Each of them made mention of the locations of their previous marathons and the enjoyment surrounding visiting these locations. All four of the participants have run the Chicago Marathon at least twice. They each referenced the size of the race, the crowd support and enjoying different landmarks along the run. Jimmy stated the following about the Chicago Marathons he participated in during his pre-race interview.

*Those (marathons) stick out and then everyone of the Chicago's stick out to me. I can tell you each one of them (Appendix B, 525-526).*

He also presented his thoughts on finishing in the Notre Dame Stadium in his post-race interview.

*I always wanted to go to Notre Dame, I always wanted to attend school there, I always wanted to see a football game there... you kind of go through your head... Ara Parseghian.. even Devine. All of the ... Joe Montana, Theismann... they all ran through that tunnel just like I did. Students get to go to Notre Dame, never get to do that. This was a once in a lifetime experience and everything goes through your mind about some of the players that went there (Appendix E, 4520457).*

Dena also provided some details about the sites surrounding the race in her journal.

*I wish I could describe how cool it was to turn the corner at mile 25 and in the sky was the gold roof of the ND administration building. Then there was the long stretch to the football stadium.. (Appendix C, 259-261)*

The course and destination were foundational to this category, and the role the weather played rounded it out.

### *Weather*

The experiences described by the participants reflect a popular scene from the 1980 movie *Caddyshack* (1980). This is in reference to the scene where the Bishop, played by Henry Wilcoxon, is having his best round of golf ever during a thunderstorm; he misses an easy putt, looks skyward and yells "rat farts!", and is immediately struck down by a bolt of lightning. None of the participants experienced being struck by lightning, but the heat definitely provided for many challenges to the participants. Meb describes his challenges with the heat during a previous race in his pre-race interview.

*It was incredibly hot. I think that is probably the best way to put it. Far hotter than I was prepared for from a hydration stand point and maybe even a mental standpoint. Yeah, I was in trouble at about mile 6 at that race* (Appendix B, 193-195).

Dena also provided some insight into the challenges weather brings to the training and completion of a marathon.

*I over slept so I didn't start until 8:30 usually not a big deal in April but is was 70 degree and the sphere of death was already out. . not good* (Appendix C, 29-30).

The temperature, the sun and humidity added an increased level of difficulty to the participants in their training runs and for some, during the race. The environmental category was slightly different from the remainder of the categories found through the content analysis because of it being centered outside of the participants. In any case, the

sub-categories captured in these codes and category were transparent across all participants and provided insight into the experiences of the participants.

### Summary

The results of the content analysis provided insight into the categories and sub-categories that emerged in the course of the research. Each participant experienced these elements in a unique way. The following chapter will provide a description of the transformational elements experienced by the participants as they relate to the categories and codes described in this chapter.

## Chapter 5: Transformational Learning

The theory of transformational learning is rooted in the belief that true learning is catalyzed by a disorienting event and is realized through the conscious reflection of the assumptions surrounding the learner's beliefs, feelings and actions (Cranton, 2000, 2006; Daloz, 2000; Dirkx, 1997; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow 1991, 2000; Taylor, 1986). This chapter will provide examples of how each of the participants experienced the fundamental elements of transformational learning: disorientation, reflection and social validation, as they were presented in Chapter 2 in the context of the categories and codes presented in Chapter 4. The chapter is organized as a function of the elements of transformational learning and will provide descriptions of the cases of each of the participants as opposed to the analytical categories presented in Chapter 4.

### Disorientation

The extent that each learner reacts to a disorienting event is dependent on four determinants. These determinants are the content of the trigger, the state of the learner, the circumstances surrounding the trigger and the psychological preferences of the learner (Cohen & Piper, 2000; Cranton, 2006, Mezirow, 1991, 2000). The following sections will provide documentary evidence of the details of the triggers each participant experienced as a result of training for and completing the 2009 Sunburst Marathon.

### *Pre*

Pre experienced an array of disorienting events throughout the course of the research. The content of the triggers and the circumstances surrounding the triggers he experienced manifested in each of the four categories detailed in Chapter 4. The social

triggers Pre experienced were centered on the relationships with his family and his interaction with Jimmy in the last few miles of the race.

Pre experienced some level of disorientation from having to balance training schedules with his wife. He described the disorientation in his pre-race interview.

*Training for it is time constraints (sic). Each marathon it gets tougher and tougher. I have three kids, um and now Maura is running so we've had to split time. I've had to cut runs short on Saturday mornings thinking that I need to get home so I can watch the kids so Maura can do her long run. Um..That's tough!*

(Appendix B, 314-317)

He references this disorientation again in his journal.

*Well I have one more 20 miler to go and I hope that one is a little easier. I have tentatively planned that for two weeks from now. Maura and I are already jockeying for running time that weekend as we have several things planned with friends and Maura has a 9 or 10 miler set for that week. (Appendix C, 418-421)*

Pre also shared the trigger of seeing his family as he approached the finish-line in his post-race interview.

*Coming into the stadium and hearing the applause, which was being piped in, but coming into the stadium and looking up to the right and seeing my daughter, I remember seeing my daughter and my in-laws up there. I remember waving and I remember them seeing me. I thought it was awesome that they were there to see me finish. (Appendix E, 310-314)*

These triggers presented a disorienting dilemma for Pre as he saw both his running and family in a different light.

The second key trigger was his interaction with Jimmy in the last few miles of the race. Pre wrote about this in his journal and discussed this during his post-race interview.

*(Journal): As I approached mile 25, I heard a familiar and unwanted voice, Jimmy came up behind me and gave me a word of encouragement. He said, "stay with me." He had done this in 2006 at Chicago and I was only able to run with him for 5 steps. I did better this time, I stayed with him for 50 meters and then I was done. I couldn't keep up with him. I say he was an unwanted voice because I really wish I could have beat him. I have never beaten Jimmy in a marathon. I have bettered him in 5k's and even a 10 miler but half and fulls, he has my number. And although we don't compete against each other, I would have considered it a great accomplishment to finish in front of him in a marathon. He is a machine. (Appendix C, 599-607)*

*(Post-race interview): I can't believe that I still have two miles to go. When Jimmy passed me, it was "son of a bitch!" I really did, I thought... he told me at the beginning of the race that he wanted to run a 3:40. . . . I told him I wanted to run a 3:30. I made no secrets about it. We went out together and everything was going great. I was doing great and he was doing great and I kind of left him. That was not big deal, sometimes he would fall back a little bit. A little over 8 minute miles. It's kind of the unwritten rule... run your own race. At mile 25 I had just run a 10:30 mile. I looked down and said if I run another 10:30 mile I*

*am not going to PR. I felt horrible. I said I have to go faster. So I tried to go faster, and then all of a sudden I heard “ Hey buddy!” and I thought oh great it’s Jimmy. Passed me and said ‘go with me!’ I said “alright!” I went with him for about 50 yards and he kept going and I couldn’t go any further with him. I thought.... Son of a gun, I thought I at least had Jimmy. I’ve never beat him in a marathon, so it would have been nice to finish ahead of him. (Appendix E, 375-387)*

The above demonstrates the magnitude of the disorientation and also provides entry into some of the critical reflection initiated from the events. Pre also encountered triggers within the emotional category. The trigger associated within the emotional category was rooted in his description of crossing the finish-line and the announcer calling his name.

The following are the accounts of the disorienting event from his journal.

*They called my name on the loud speaker, “Pre has just finished a marathon.” That felt awesome. I have finished 5 before but hearing the announcer single me out felt really cool. As I crossed the line, I staggered to the water tent and then to the food/popsicle tent. I felt horrible. I was not walking straight and I thought I might fall. As I walked through the crowd, I couldn’t help but feel that strong sense of accomplishment come over me. It was like waves of emotion just kept pouring over me. It felt just like after my first marathon. I was overcome with emotion and I couldn’t believe that I had done it. It almost made me cry many times. I don’t know how to describe it in words but it is a great feeling.*

(Appendix C, 617-627)



The magnitude of this trigger appeared greater than that of those presented from the social category. The physical state that Pre was in at that moment potentially added to the magnitude of the trigger.

The physical disorientation that Pre encountered was triggered through the fatigue he described in his journal.

*As the race weathered on, my splits went into the 9's and then 10 minute mile range. I walked through water stops and even walked in the middle of a mile one time hoping my legs would feel better. I started to feel my left quad cramp and my left calf cramp. I was praying they wouldn't seize up. As these last few miles went on, I came to the realization that 3:30 was not in me today. I just didn't physically have it in me. Every time I tried to speed up, my legs would cramp and my breathing would get more labored. I only felt good when I stopped and walked. (Appendix C, 588-594)*

The physical pain and fatigued triggered Pre to reflect on his goals for the race and challenged his will to persevere to the finish-line.

The triggers that Pre encountered in the environmental category were less about the actual finish-line and more about the destination. He wrote about the excitement of visiting South Bend with his family in his journal and pre-race interview and it is this excitement that provided for the environmental disorientation. He mentioned the heat as a concern in his pre-race interview and in his journal, but quickly dismissed it as a factor in his late race challenges. He was excited about visiting South Bend as he is for other races he would like to complete as recorded in his pre-race interview.

*I'd like to do the Las Vegas Marathon, just because I like Las Vegas. Eventually I would like to do New York. That's terribly expensive to stay up there. Everybody would like to do Boston. I can't qualify for Boston yet so... I'm going to have to wait until I'm 40. (Appendix B, 243-246)*

The allure of the location is the foundation for this disorientation.

Pre encountered disorientation throughout the course of the training and the marathon. The magnitude of the disorientation was magnified as he became fatigued during the race. The best example of this was the trigger of hearing his name announced as he finished. The magnitude of this trigger nearly had him in tears.

*Dena*

Dena experienced an array of disorienting events throughout the course of the research. The content of the triggers and the circumstances surrounding the triggers she experienced manifested in each of the four categories detailed in Chapter 4. The social triggers Dena experienced were centered on identifying her role while running with a group.

Dena was the only one of the four participants who completed the majority of her long runs by herself. This is an element that will be more fully explored in the subsequent section on reflection. In the context of the social category Dena's trigger surfaced on a training run with the researcher.

*Tim met me 11 miles into my run and kept me company for 4 miles, it was nice to have company. I did start into my normal freak out mode when someone runs with me though. I start to make it all about them no matter what they say or do. Am I holding them back, should i run faster for them, etc.. are all thing (sic) I struggle*

*with along with the ability to breathe cause I'm usually the slow one in these situations. But I noticed Tim did not have his Garmin on that's when I realized he was just there to observe and keep me company. But it so hard to break habit of making it about other people for example: When Tim and I turn around to head back to his car, we were walking and we kept walking. . . Now going through my head is "Tim really doesn't walk much why are we walking" it's then that it dawned on me, this was my run, it all about me and we would run when I chose to. . .with that I started to run or should I say we started to. (Appendix C, 81-91)*

As demonstrated in the above section of Dena's journal, she was disoriented by simply running with someone. She was further triggered by the subtle absence of a GPS from her running partner. This trigger demonstrates how seemingly small and subtle things can provide a catalyst for reflection. The triggers that generated her disorientation in the emotional category were less subtle.

Dena was struggling with her identity as a runner throughout this training. She referenced comparing herself to the runner she was in 2006. This is the year that she ran her personal record for a marathon in Chicago. She demonstrated her issue with respecting who she is from one of her journal entries.

*But for some reason this whole training I have been running slower. . . which let (sic) face it I am not the faster speed demon, but I am running slower for me . . . and every run it is a consistent slower. Which bothers me. Probably because I'm comparing myself to the 2006 self which was in much better shape. Anyway I've*

*really been beating myself up about that. . . making me cranky even on my short runs. (Appendix C, 208-212)*

The trigger that disoriented her and generated the critical reflection was provided by a neighbor as Dena described in her journal.

*So here it was Saturday I (am) almost done with my 8 miles the weekend before the marathon and I'm not excited. I'm cranky about being slower!! Then at 7.89 mile a mere .11 from home a man in my neighbor(hood) was getting ready to the cross the street said to me "Don't you ever get sick of running?" , I responded back one of my typically responses that "That I like to eat more". But it was there that it hit me, my neighbors don't know how fast I run or care. . . They just know I run. This exchange put me in a really good mood for my last .11. I have decided that maybe I should let go of 2006 Dena. It will be hard, but I have decided to lock her in a truck until after 06Jun09. (Appendix C, 212-220)*

A sense of respect provided by a friendly and observant neighbor was the trigger to a hugely impactful disorienting dilemma. Once again, the state of the individual played a large role in the magnitude of the disorientation. The magnitude of the physical triggers was not as profound as the emotional triggers, but two disorientations surfaced in the analysis of the data.

The first of the physical disorienting dilemmas surfaced as a result of a health issue Dena encountered late in training. The following is an excerpt from her journal that describes the trigger.

*Then my PF[Plantar Fasciitis] began to make its presence known when I got done and continue to remind me all day long that it hasn't gone away. All day long I debated myself: "I'm in taper skipping one more won't hurt, it's a little warm, the rest will do the PF good"(said the lazyboy talking on my right shoulder), "You haven't had a full 18 weeks of training more like 12 and then you have missed a bunch of days during those 122 weeks" (said A little Jimmy sitting on my left shoulder). . . . What did I do??*

(Appendix C, 162-168)

The symptoms related to PF are extreme pain in the heel and is generally related to the tightening of muscles pulling on the tendons in the foot (Bingham, 2002). The pain provided a trigger for Dena to reflect.

The second physical disorientation occurred during the race. Dena described the fatigue that set in during the later stages of the race in her journal.

*And I decided to try for it but the mile 22 -23 I just ran out of steam. . . I thought I was moving but I wasn't . . . and the walks in the water stop got longer. . . . I was a little mad at myself at first cause I was only an hour and 2 minutes from a PR at mile 20 and let the wall beat me. (Appendix C, 254-257)*

The fatigue helps define Dena's state towards the completion of the race and potentially amplified the environmental triggers she encountered in the last three miles of the race. Dena experienced a disorienting dilemma as she rounded the corner at mile 25 of the race and began to run towards the administration building (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Administration Building**



Dena's post-race interview describes the trigger.

*I wish I could describe how cool it was to turn the corner at mile 25 and in the sky was the gold roof of the ND administration building. Then there was the long stretch to the football stadium. . . you reach it but it turns out that's the wrong end and you have to keep running towards touch down Jesus. . . the turn into the stadium. . . the run down the ramp all while the fight song it playing over the speakers. . . It was COOL!!! (Appendix 259-263)*

The different attributes of the destination was the trigger that provided the disorientation.

The combination of her fatigued state and the triggers she had just encountered provided disorientation as she crossed the finish-line. When asked what it was like to run through the tunnel, Dena stated, "*I almost cried.*" She went on to say,

*I don't know . . . you kind of just ( ) you just realized what you did. You just got done. You're emotionally spent and you're running down that tunnel and they have the fight song playing and you're thinking like. Oohoohohoa! Sometimes*

*that happens. One other marathon I almost started crying at the end. I don't know why. (Appendix E, 120-123)*

The disorienting dilemmas that Dena encountered on the race course increased in magnitude as she became more fatigued.

### *Jimmy*

Jimmy experienced several disorienting events throughout the course of the research. The content of the triggers and the circumstances surrounding the triggers he experienced also manifested in each of the four categories detailed in Chapter 4. The social triggers Jimmy experienced were centered on his interaction with the running community.

Jimmy's post-race interview provided insight into the disorientation that was triggered through his interaction with members of the running group.

*I missed running with a big group. This group was fun, but it is not as big as previous races. I look forward to getting the bigger group back together. I enjoyed running with Pre this time. He and I fed off of each other. The funniest thing. . . I won't ever forget this. We were running at mile 5 and running through our first subdivision. We had to turn left, turn left and then turn right. Everyone in front of us were turning right and there was a lady in front of us, and Pre says "what way do we go?" (Laughter) That woman looked at him, like are you nuts! I laughed my ass off, but that's the fun of running with someone. The practice runs were fun. (Appendix E, 528-536)*

*Probably the most challenging was to get Paula to relax and not get nervous. Trying to tell her that you don't have to be first, finish in the top five. It really*

*didn't have anything to do with my running. It is always about trying to get her under control. Because I know how nervous she gets before a race. (Appendix E, 493-496)*

In the first segment, Jimmy is slightly disoriented by Pre's interaction with one of the race coordinators. Even though the trigger is subtle, it caused Jimmy to reflect on running with a larger group and the joy that came from training with Pre. The second segment illustrates how Jimmy becomes disoriented when another member of the group is faced with a disorienting dilemma. The highs and lows of the running group also cross into the emotional triggers Jimmy experienced.

The emotional trigger that emerged through the analysis of the data was rooted in fulfillment. The satisfaction Jimmy gleaned from entering Notre Dame Stadium was the dominant emotional trigger as indicated by his post-race interview.

*Once I hit the grass in the stadium, I didn't feel anything. I felt like I could run another marathon. You know, I felt that good. But I didn't want to run another marathon (Laughter) (Appendix E, 447-449).*

The disorienting dilemma was described as having no feeling, and Jimmy's expression as he described the experience was an indication of the magnitude of the experience.

The experience that brought Jimmy to that place was also filled with physical disorientation. He was struggling with knee pain for a large portion of the training. His journal showed the disorientation that was triggered by this pain.

*Easy 4 miles. . .for some crazy reason, now my knee has started to hurt. Not good..two weeks out from the marathon. . .going to run with a knee strap to see if that helps! Busy day at the store..so that up and down at the store didn't help the*



*knee!* (Appendix C, 685-686)

*Didn't do speed work in the morning..ran 3-800s at night with Pre..knee still hurting but not too bad that it would stop me from running!* (Appendix 692-694)

*Jimmy: . . .another easy day of 5 miles. . . .knee is still there but not as bad..really busy at store..so that means more up and down which isn't good for the knee!*  
(Appendix C, 696-698)

The physical pain triggered Jimmy to reflect on his goals and re-evaluate his training plan. The adjustment to the plan was a bit of a disorienting event, but it was the course and destination that provided for the disorientation with the greatest magnitude.

Jimmy's disorientation associated with the location surfaced the night prior to the race. I observed him in the Notre Dame bookstore on June 5, 2009. He and the other group members had gone to dinner before they went to the bookstore. Jimmy, Dena and Pre all found souvenirs and each bought a Notre Dame Cross Country T-shirt. Jimmy often stated how much he was looking forward to running into the stadium. Another environmental trigger was his excitement about having his picture taken by a race course photographer with Touch Down Jesus in the background. Touch Down Jesus is a mural on one of the buildings behind the stadium that depicts Jesus with both arms raised in the air.

Jimmy encountered disorientation throughout the course of the training and the marathon. The magnitude of the disorientation did not increase as a result of fatigue, but instead came to a crescendo as he entered the stadium.

*Meb*

Meb's exposure to disorienting dilemmas was few and far between during training, but he experienced a large number of disorienting events the night prior to the race and continued his disorientation onto the race course. The content of the triggers and the circumstances surrounding the triggers he experienced manifested in all four categories. The social triggers Meb experienced were centered around relationships with his wife and in the support that he received by the group on race day.

Meb's wife unexpectedly signed-up for the half marathon on the day prior to the marathon. This caught Meb by surprise and supplied a trigger that caused him to reflect. According to Meb, his wife had not stepped one foot into the race expo when she decided to sign up for and run the half marathon. She had not trained for the race. Meb was concerned about his wife running in clothes she had bought just prior to the race and then running 13.1 miles. He was disoriented by her sudden impulse to run the half-marathon, the fact that she had to purchase clothes to wear and concern for her lack of training. The trigger also generated reflection into a comparison of her success with limited training. Meb's wife provided a second trigger for Meb.

She re-entered the race course to provide Meb with support in the later stages of the race. Meb was also disoriented as Dena passed him towards the end of the race.

*Dena found me at this point and with a gleam in her eye and a spring in her step offered assistance. I may have growled at her...things were becoming a bit fuzzy due to the pain. For whatever reason she was gone....sorry Dena. (Appendix C, 336-339)*

The trigger was generated as Dena attempted to support Meb, and also provided for a disorienting dilemma for her as she empathized with Meb.

The entire group felt an increase level of empathy for Meb the night prior to the race as he lost his car keys and was frantically trying to resolve the issue. Meb, in his journal, described how he lost his keys. This appeared to be a trigger that disoriented him.

*All goes according to plan until arrival when my "keys" decide to depart the area without permission. Massive spike in heart rate after GM kindly tells me they have no approved locksmith in the area and they would come pick up my vehicle tomorrow morning and I could pick it up Monday. 4 hours later and now with a headache I give some local locksmith access to the truck and have him take the door apart. Of course I have now come to the brilliant conclusion that someone actually stole my keys and will be coming back in the night to abscond with my truck. As I watch slick dismantle my door our dinner plans come and go. . .pizza then gets delivered. Cold pizza may not have been the best choice for a pre-marathon meal but it was handy and I could eat it and keep and my vehicle in sight to ensure the gangs that roam South Bend did not make a move on it.*

(Appendix C, 313-323)

This trigger challenged Meb's desire to complete the race and his perseverance through challenge. The emotional challenges that Meb encountered through the disorientation associated with losing his keys were compounded with physical triggers on race day.

The physical triggers that Meb encountered on race day involved both pain and fatigue and provided for a disorienting dilemma.

*By mile 16 the events of the previous evening, poor meal choice, lack of sleep and oh yes...no Gatorade early on came back to haunt me in the form of severe cramps. I was running 8:35ish prior to this but mile 17 was 10:00 flat. Mile 19...I stopped, literally stopped. I should say that my legs stopped, refused to go, calf muscles had other plans and apparently it involved providing me with brilliant searing pain. I have had cramps before but this time was different. Had there been a sharp instrument of any kind becoming a double amputee would have been a no brainer. (Appendix C, 330-336)*

In addition to providing a trigger, the pain also changed Meb's overall physical and mental state. Meb was experiencing additional events that established a potential for an increase in the magnitude and frequency of disorientation.

The increase in frequency and magnitude manifested through his experience with the course and the weather. Meb referenced his issues with the heat in his pre-race interview, journal and post-race interview. In addition to the heat he was also triggered by subtleties on the course. He realized at a certain point that he was on an out and back portion of the course and was going to have to retrace his steps if he was going to finish the race. He described this trigger in his journal.

*So for every step I took heading away from downtown I now realize I have to take those same steps back. How is that for a pep talk to one's own self? Not good! (Appendix C, 343-344)*

This is an example of how a small event can trigger a state of disorientation.

Whether major or minor each of the participants experienced disorientation in each of the four categories: social, emotional, physical and environmental. The

magnitude of the disorientation was gauged through the critical reflection that followed it. The next section of this chapter will review the critical reflection and social validation that the participants experienced as a result of the disorientation previously described.

#### Critical Reflection, Social Validation and Associated Learning

The result of a disorienting event is that it causes individuals to critically reflect on their current assumptions and attempt to validate the results of their reflection (Cranton, 2006; Merizow, 1991). This critical reflection has the potential of being extremely uncomfortable for the learner, and can sometimes act as a stimulus to explore new possibilities and generate learning. Learning can be physical, emotional, and spiritual or some combination thereof (Brooks, 2001). Table 6 presents the distribution of learning within the identified domains for the participants.

Table 6: Domains of Learning

	Dena	Jimmy	Pre	Meb
Physical	x	x	x	x
Emotional	x	x	x	x
Spiritual	x			

This section will provide insight on examples of the critical reflection and potential learning the participants experienced in different domains: physical, emotional and spiritual.

#### *Physical*

The physical learning, also labeled as somatic learning, is learning from and with the body (Heckler, 1997). The disorienting dilemmas that the participants experienced in

training for and completing a marathon generated the opportunity for learning in the physical domain.

The somatic learning that was observed in the course of the research was exhibited by all four participants. Each of them expressed reflection around their physical capabilities and limitations. Pre's post-race interview provides a description of the reflection and somatic learning he encountered as a result of training for and completing a marathon.

*It's only the second time that I came out of a marathon injury free and able to run. So I'm really excited about the prospects for the next marathon. This one taught me that I'm capable of a lot more. I'm capable of running faster. I can do it if I put my mind and body to the training. I'm excited about trying that out.*

(Appendix E, 347-350)

Another example of the somatic learning was provided in Dena's post-race interview when she started "*I was in better shape than I thought. Um... actually achieved the reason I like to do it again.*" (Appendix E, 7-8)

Meb provided an example of his learning in his post-race interview.

*If it's warm out... definitely hydrate every opportunity you get. Get plenty of sleep the night before. Don't lose your keys the night before the run* (Appendix E, 207-208).

Jimmy also experienced learning in this domain. He discussed how he now knew that he can still run a nice easy marathon and not be injured as a result.

In all of the examples, learning from and within the body occurred as a result of training for and completing a marathon. The next section will explore the emotional learning that transpired in the course of the research.

### *Emotional*

The emotional intelligence of each individual is dependent on the person's level of self-awareness (Goleman, 2002; McCown, Jensen, Freedman, & Rideout 1996). McCown, Jensen, Freedman, and Rideout stress that emotional intelligence skills can be grouped into three areas: knowing who you are today, choosing who you are going to be in the future and stating the noble purpose for this journey. The participants experienced an increased level of self-awareness and provided clear examples of defining who they want to be with respect to different aspects of their life.

At least two of the participants appeared to be more self-aware about who they were as runners and who they aspired to be. Pre provided an example of an increased self-awareness in his journal.

*Sure I had some sore feelings about coming close to my goal but I can't let myself think that way. I gave this race everything I had. I left everything out on the course. I couldn't have sprinted across the line if my life depended on it. And 3:33 is nothing to be sad about. I worked hard and I should be proud of that. I refuse to be a runner that bitches about running a time that many others would love to run. It is an unwritten rule that you are not allowed to complain about a PR. I don't intend on breaking that rule. (Appendix C, 669-674)*

In this example he demonstrates his awareness that even though he didn't achieve running a sub 3:30 marathon, he did set a personal record. This is something that is not

often experienced by the few who chose to run more than one marathon. He showed that he is aware of being a grateful runner. Pre expands on this concept in his post-race interview.

*I'm more confident with my running. Anytime I do a marathon, it makes me more confident in general... at work, at home (Appendix E, 389-390).*

Pre shows that his increased self-awareness transcends running and flows into the other elements of his life.

Another example of an increased level of self-awareness was provided by Meb. In his post-race interview, he stated he felt stronger and better than he ever had before. He was not sure why, but he went on to explain that,

*I don't know. I went into this just wanting to get my confidence back and I had one of the worst races of my life. And I feel better about running than I ever have before. I don't know. It sort of re-grouped me somehow. I found my center again. I didn't really stop. I took four days off and went right back into it.*

*Yeah...I don't know... usually I take 6 or 7 months off. (Appendix E, 169-173)*

The learning Meb experienced also enabled him to look forward to applying the learning another marathon in the same calendar year.

The learning in the emotional domain demonstrated an increase in self-awareness for the participants. Each of them experienced this in a unique manner consistent with the theories of adult education (Cox, et. al., 2003; Grow, 1991, 1994; Hiemstra, 2003; Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1971). The principles of adult education further resonated in the learning the participants experienced in the spiritual domain.



### *Spiritual*

The spiritual domain of learning was not universally expressed by all of the participants. As described in Chapter 2, the biological relationship with the unconscious establishes a tangible reference point to compare our new interactions with. The location of the archetypes in the unconscious insinuates that we may or may not be consciously aware of their existence, yet they greatly influence our perceptions and actions (Dirkx, 2001). Dena is the only participant that seems to have experienced learning in this domain as a result of training for and completing the Sunburst Marathon.

Dena wrote the names of individuals who impacted her life and are deceased on her shoes the night before the race (Figure 6).

#### **Figure 6: Names on Shoes**



She provided the following explanation for doing this during her post-race interview.

*On one shoe there was two Joes. One was Joe Brady, he got kicked out of Notre Dame. He was my inherited father's father who got kicked out of Notre Dame, but was always a Notre Dame fan. I lost him a couple of years ago. My friend, Tammy's father was a very big Notre Dame fan and he passed away this year. It kind of puts everything into perspective. (Appendix E, 127-131)*

*Well on the other shoe I put my dad's name. It just reminds me and taking them with me. It's always good to make it about something else. Make the old man..... I think the Joes would have loved to have been on the field. (Appendix E, 133-135)*

The use of the marathon to make the connection with these personally influential people and the associated learning related to the connection establishes the presence of learning within the spiritual domain.

The critical reflection of the participants as it relates to their disorienting dilemmas emerges through the learning in the different domains described in this section. The learners' experiences were dependent on their unique views, desire and choice. This is in alignment with the self-directed nature of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980).

### Summary

The participants each experienced triggering events from the four categories: social, emotional, physical and environmental, defined in Chapter 4. In addition, they provided evidence of critical reflection through the learning they experienced in the domains previously discussed that included physical, emotional and spiritual. The social validation elements of transformational learning was not directly linked to specific learning, but were inherently embedded in the social category defined in Chapter 4. The next chapter will provide an interpretation of the findings, a reflection on the research and conclusions derived from the research.

## Chapter 6: Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to determine the transformational experiences, if any, of participants training and completing a marathon. The physical and mental stresses that accompany this task provide participants the opportunity to experience some level of disorientation and potentially challenge some of their existing paradigms. Four marathon runners—one female and three males—participated in the study. They ranged in age from 33 to 64 and had all previously completed at least 5 marathons. The participants prepared for and participated in the Sunburst Marathon, a 26K marathon held at Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

The primary research question explored in this study was: What is the transformational experience of participants training for and completing a marathon? This question was intended to detect the presence of transformational learning throughout the process. Secondary questions within the study were intended to provide a richer framework to view, if any, the transformational learning of marathon runners. These questions include:

1. What experiences catalyze the transformation of the adult learner who trains for and completes a marathon?
2. What domains of learning is the transformation associated with?

In this chapter, I review the study findings, discuss implications and recommendations for future research.

### Discussion

The results of the study provided descriptions of the experiences the subjects had with respect to training for and completing a marathon. The data provides insight into the

different triggers for learning as a function of the process and the different domains that the learning occurred in. Since the learning associated with the activities of this study existed outside of a formal institution and was neither structured nor intentional, they fall into the framework of incidental learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2001). The learners capitalized on the opportunities to learn that were presented to them in the process (Merriam, 2001). In addition, the data supports the presence of transformational learning in these domains.

### Content Analysis

The content analysis identified four categories: social, emotional, physical and environmental. The four categories were confirmed by a second researcher who independently conducted a content analysis. These categories were defined by the sub-categories and properties that emerged during the analysis of the journals, observations and interviews and through the collaboration of the researchers. The details of the content analysis were documented in a list of codes (Appendix A).

The social category is comprised of three sub-categories: relationship, community and support. The properties associated with relationship were focused on the mutual accountability between individuals, whereas the properties associated with community revolved around the sense of belonging to a group with common interest. The properties for support referenced any action attempting to provide support or empathy to an individual or group. The extrinsic element of the social category is a differentiating factor between the social and emotional categories.

The emotional category is intrinsically driven. The four sub-categories: fulfillment, respect, perseverance, and self-awareness, are framed through the thoughts

and feelings of the participants. The properties defining fulfillment relate to the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that the participants experienced through their training and participation in the Sunburst Marathon, and the properties for respect are generated through their appreciation for the race, other runners and themselves. Perseverance is rooted in the participants' choices to confront, challenge or overcome the barriers they encountered through their experiences. The understanding of who they were in the varied roles of their lives as a result of these choices underscored the sub-theme of self-awareness for the participants.

The physical category provided insight into the origin of some of the barriers that the participants encountered through their experiences. It is defined by two sub-categories: pain and fatigue. The fundamental difference between the sub-categories in this category is a function of discomfort and energy loss. Pain is directly related to the physical discomfort of the participants as it relates to their running activities. Fatigue is centered on a reduction expected performance as it relates to running. Fatigue was demonstrated through a reduction in speed and the feeling of increased weight on the legs of the participants. Pain surfaced with specific discomfort associated with an array of locations of the participants' body.

The environmental category contains three sub-categories: course, destination and weather. The properties associated with the race course include parts of the course such as the start-line (Figure 1), finish-line (Figure 2) and water stops (Figure 3). The properties related to destination are sites and features unique to the area that host the race. Examples of these features for the Sunburst Marathon are the Notre Dame Stadium and the Notre Dame Administration Building (Figure 5). The properties of weather were best

represented through the participants' thoughts, feelings and interaction with the temperature, humidity and rain.

The absence of data supporting a category rooted in health was an unexpected result of the content analysis. The expectation of a category based in health was expected because previous research has identified it as one of four key motivators for training for and completing a marathon (Havenar & Lochbaum, 2007; Masters, Ogles and Jolton, 1993; Ogles & Masters, 2003). The remaining three: personal achievement, psychological factors and social factors were all present in the analysis and captured in the categories and sub-categories. The greatest difference between the participants of this study and the samples from the aforementioned research is the experience level of the runner. Each of the participants included in this research had previously completed at least five marathons, whereas previous studies related to motivation were focused on first-time marathon runners. The categories that did emerge through the content analysis were then related to the elements of transformational learning: disorientation, critical reflection and social validation.

### Transformational Learning

The experiences of the participants provided disorientation throughout the process that spanned the four distinct categories: social, emotional, physical and environmental. Relative to transformational learning, the disorientations included the presence of pain, the euphoria of success, the challenges of the course and the impact of relationships. The experience level of the participants may have also been a factor in how they encountered the disorienting triggers throughout the process. First-time marathon runners have the potential disorientation related to physically running further than they had ever

previously run and the mental triggers related to hitting the wall as described by both Meb and Dena. As experienced marathon runners, the participants had emic knowledge of these challenges, and yet encountered a different set of triggers through their unique and individual experiences.

The triggers the participants encountered caused them to challenge their current paradigms not only associated with running, but life in general. Pre challenged how he saw himself as a marathon runner, a detective, a father and a husband. Meb and Dena challenged their identities as runners, while Jimmy challenged his paradigms with respect to age, ability and relationships. The process of challenging their paradigms manifested through critical reflection. It is this critical reflection that defines the second element of the theory of transformational learning (Cranton, 2000, 2006; Daloz, 2000; Dirkx, 1997; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow 1991, 2000; Taylor, 1986).

The self-reflection was also visible through the comparison of the participants' existing paradigms to the standards of a given community. This was observed through the emergence of the sub-categories described in the emotional category of the content analysis. Pre, a 33 year old male, who had run five previous marathons, provided an example of this in his journal where he described how he was more confident with both his running and with life in general. The lesson that translates into the real-world is that people need to be open to challenging the paradigms that comprise their worldview through critical reflection.

Dena, the only female in the study, and the only participant who is not nor has been married, provided an emic view of her reflection in her journal. She described how the interaction with other runners and friends provided her with motivation and a level of

increased excitement about the race. Dena also challenged and attempted to socially validate her shift with Meb's wife while on the back half of the race course. She was running better than she expected and was disoriented about her elevated pace. This openness to hear and value the information and opinions provided by others is also a key element in the process of transformational learning (Cranton, 2000, 2006; Daloz, 2000; Dirkx, 1997; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow 1991, 2000; Taylor, 1986).

The transformational learning that the participants experienced in the course of training for and completing the Sunburst Marathon was realized in the physical, emotional and spiritual domains. Examples of learning in the physical domain include a better understanding of the physical potential the participants' have as well as the impact particular elements of their training have on their bodies and results on race day. The emergence of confidence is an example of learning in the emotional domain and Dena's relationship with deceased influential people in her life provides a sample of the learning she encountered in the spiritual domain. The experiences in the physical and emotional domains were consistent among all four of the participants. Learning in the spiritual domain was unique to only one of the participants. The only participant to clearly experience learning in the spiritual domain was also the only female participant. This is consistent with the literature on women and spirituality, which indicates that women experience learning in the spiritual domain at a greater frequency than men (Tisdell, 2008).

The unique nature of the learning associated with each of the participants supports the self-directed nature of the adult learner (Knowles, 1975, 1980). This was especially evident with respect to the development of people who are open to change and growth



when the opportunities present themselves (Elias & Merriam, 1995). Additionally, the results are underscored with elements of the humanistic philosophy. These elements include: autonomy, individuality, self-awareness and self actualization (Elias & Merriam).

The participants in this study articulated their freedom of choice or autonomy in their journals and interviews. For example, Pre acknowledged his autonomy to choose to run or not. The external circumstances of his career or family did not make the choice, he as an individual was accountable for the decision. The individuality or potentiality of the participants also manifested through the analysis of the data. Dena provides an example of this as she realizes her potential as a runner. The self-awareness and self actualization the participants experienced were described in the details of the emotional category in chapter 4. The humanistic foundation of the theory of transformational learning supports its presence in this study and also espouses the cross-domain learning that the participants experienced (Knowles, 1975, 1980).

#### Theoretical Context

The presence of transformational learning related to training for and completing a marathon establishes potential practical significance to the fields of adult education, physical therapy and management. Adult educators, whether in academic or informal settings, can replicate the triggers identified in this study in an effort to disorient the learner and prompt critical reflection. Potential opportunities include the time and space that follows the completion of an assessment or practicum. The opportunity exists as the learner may be experiencing an increased level of fatigue and varying levels of satisfaction with the results of the assessment or activity.

The results of the therapeutic treatments involved in physical therapy also provide for potential applications to the findings of this study. One potential opportunity is the use of journaling to capture the thoughts and feelings of those experiencing the therapy. This may aid both the patient and therapist in learning about what is working and not with respect to the treatment. In addition, a potential for self-awareness exist for the patient as a result of their therapy. A second prospective application related to physical therapy is centered on the motivation related to self-achievement. The experiences embedded within the process of training for and completing a marathon provides a series of goals and milestones for patients to strive for and concludes with the opportunity for the recognition and satisfaction of completing the race. This activity could leverage on the understanding that personal achievement was a foundational component of the results of this research.

Personal achievement also crosses into a potential application for managers within organizations and institutions. Many professionals travel as a function of their job, and this activity is sometimes required to achieve the individual goals established through performance management processes. This study demonstrated that environment, including location, is a potential trigger for disorientation for the adult learner. Managers could assign developmental activities for their traveling staff that leverage on the potential disorientation that the destination may cause. The following section will provide recommendations for future studies.

### Recommendations

The methods utilized in this research were appropriate in answering both the primary and secondary research questions. The three methods of data collection:

interviews, observations and journals provided both emic and etic accounts of the experiences related to training for and completing the Sunburst Marathon. The use of member checks and a secondary researcher to review the results of the content analysis also provided for an additional element of validity to the research. With this in mind, there are recommendations for future studies in this area.

The data collection did not begin during the first week of training. The enrollment of participants took more time than expected and this generated a potential gap within the observations of the experiences of the participants within the first weeks of training. The participants provided journal accounts of the early weeks of their training, but the researcher did not have field notes to compare and contrast with. The biggest challenge that this presents is that additional triggers and learning only associated with the early weeks of training were missed in this research. Hence, in a subsequent study, allowing more time to enroll participants would enable the researcher to experience and observe the entire process with the participants.

The researcher was only able to observe one of the participants during the middle of the race. The researcher attempted to get to mile marker 9 on the race course, and was unaware that it was not on one of the roads, but on a local trail. The participants provided journal accounts of their experiences along the course, but the researcher did not have field notes from a midrace vantage. Even though the participants wrote about their experiences on the course, the researcher did not have a consistent midrace point of reference in the observations. Thus, the use of multiple researchers for data collection is recommended. This would enable field notes to be collected on more training runs and at several locations on the race course. It would also add to the depth of the data collected.

In addition to observations and interviews, participants engaged in self reporting through online journaling. Although, all of the participants completed their journal entries, the level of detail varied. Some of the participants were simply focused on the miles related to their training and the related challenges, while others included non-running related topics. This posed a challenge in the analysis phase of the research where there were no direct observations from researcher field notes available. A future study should use a more structured template for journaling. It would provide better direction for the participants through their self-reporting.

Replicating this study would enable researchers to compare sub-categories and categories and determine if transformation learning in multiple domains is unique to the four participants of this research or if it is more a function of the activity. An additional study in a different location would especially add more depth to the environmental category presented in Chapter 4. The location is only one of a handful of variables that could be further explored.

A quantitative study including many of these variables is the second opportunity for research related to this study. Increasing the sample size and isolating variables for relevance would enable the findings to be applied more generally to the population of marathon runners. The increase in the number of people participating in marathons and the potential link to human resource development and adult learning provides both a need and an opportunity capitalize on the findings associated with the research.

### Conclusions

All of the participants started the process of training for and completing a marathon with the goal of finishing in mind. Some of them were also seeking personal

records while some were looking for entertainment. The learning that each of the participants found was more than accomplishing these goals. The participants each challenged at least one of their existing paradigms. This challenge was triggered with a disorienting event within the process, self-reflection and a conscious choice to accept the learning.

The things that catalyzed the transformational learning varied and were highlighted in the content analysis of the data collected within this study. Some of the disorientation was triggered through the physical challenges of the experience, such as new pain. Other disorientation occurred while crossing the finish line knowing that anything is possible. Other disorientation was triggered by the physical attributes of the course. The learning associated with the disorientations occurred in three domains: physical, emotional and spiritual. The results showed that the research addressed the questions associated with the purpose of the study. It also presented opportunity to further explore the questions for additional races and in a qualitative manner to potentially derive generalizations related to the phenomenon.

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### Appendix A: List of Codes

Category	Sub-Category	Definition	Properties
<b>Social</b>	Relationship	A mutual sense of accountability between individuals or groups.	Father-in –law, Friends, Running Partner, Wife
	Community	A sense of belonging to a larger body of common interest.	Running Group, Race Finishers
	Support	An act intended to provide motivation, consolation or empathy.	Cheering, Waving, Words of Encouragement
<b>Emotional</b>	Fulfillment	The feeling of joy, accomplishment or enthusiasm.	Satisfaction with Experience, Accomplishment of Desired Time, Personal Achievement
	Respect	A demonstration of admiration, understanding or appreciation.	Admiration for Runners, Understanding for Challenges, Respect for Training and Race Distance
	Perseverance	Making a conscience choice to overcome obstacles and challenges to achieve a goal	Committed, Goal Oriented, Journey, Determination
	Self-awareness	An understanding of self in the context of given surroundings.	Confidence, Competitive, Successful, Motivated, Miserable
<b>Physical</b>	Pain	Physical discomfort that relates to the activity.	Sore knee, Plantar Fasciitis
	Fatigue	Depletion of physical ability as a result of sustained activity.	Heavy Legs, Tired, Walking, Low Energy
<b>Environmental</b>	Course	Elements associated with the route utilized for a training run or race.	Hills, Crowds, Landmarks, Finish-line, Start-line

	Destination	A geographic location associated with a race.	Disney, Chicago, Notre Dame, St. Louis, Boston
	Weather	The combination of the temperature, humidity, wind and cloud cover.	Heat, Rain

## Appendix B: Pre-Race Interviews

1 Pre-race interview

2 Participant: Dena

3 Date: 29Ap09

4 Location: Fletcher's Bar and Grill

5

6 Tim: What prompted you to decide to run a marathon?

7 Dena: Honestly? A friend asked me to and the location. I like football and I've never  
8 been to Notre Dame and finishing on the 50 yard line of the stadium. Tim: How many  
9 other marathons have you run?

10 Dena: 6. 6 six previous yes.

11 Tim: What prompted you to run the other 6?

12 Dena: The first one was to see if I could do it. Then it was about seeing if you could do  
13 better. Then the group was doing it and I wanted to do it. Um ( ) yeah that's about it. I, I  
14 always have the insight of wanting to do better, try to get a PR. In reality, you don't  
15 know what will happen until that day. To be honest, all 6 of my marathons have been  
16 either Chicago or Disney and I wanted to run in a new location to see the new sites, and  
17 finishing on the 50 yard line at Notre Dame would be like.. Wow! (Laughter) Experience  
18 new things.

19 Tim: What do you hope to achieve, accomplish or learn through this experience?

20 Dena: Well.. I started training a little late, and I'm mixing it up a bit. I went from  
21 thinking I have to run hard, run hard, run hard all week long and I backed off a little bit. I

22 want to see how the difference really works. Um in the last two marathons, I had  
23 Chicago and the heat infestation of 2007 where they canceled it and my other one was the  
24 Goofy Challenge where I did the half marathon the day before the full. So I just want to  
25 see how I do with just a marathon. And, if the time is right and the conditions are right I  
26 want to see what happens. It's all about the day.

27 What are your goals for this race?

28 Dena: I'm not going to... I'd love to PR, but I'm going to be realistic. I'd love to come  
29 in at about 4:45. That's a good distance between what I have been coming in at.. That's  
30 about 5 hours. By PR is 4:38. So ( )

31 Tim: The other thing you mentioned is that you changed your training up. What are you  
32 trying to get at with this change?

33 Dena: I've increased my work hours and stuff like that. During the week I used to.. the 5  
34 marathons after the first marathon, I would be like, mid week runs would be 6, 7, 8 and  
35 sometimes even a 9. I've cut back to having one mid week run of 5, 6 and sometimes 7  
36 miles. This is usually on my longer mile weeks. And I'm only doing, I usually do three  
37 20s, but I'm only going to do two. So maybe this will help me be more rested... I don't  
38 know. Something my help my foot issue with the PF, so. Trying something different  
39 (Laughter).

40 Tim: What effects do you think that this experience will have on your life in general?

41 Dena: This particular race?

42 Tim: The training and the race.

43 Dena: I always learn something new about myself. I um.. I'm going to use my last  
44 experience as an example. In the marathon I hit the wall at mile 11 ( ) and I literally had

45 to talk myself into running one mile at a time for the remainder of the 26 miles. That had  
46 never happened to me before. There is always some insight that I learn each time I run a  
47 marathon. It's almost kind of exciting to find out what you find (Laughter) out about  
48 myself I mean.

49 Tim: You mentioned hitting the wall. How would you describe this to people who don't  
50 run?

51 Dena: Um.. The wall. This is where your mind, everything in your soul, your being is  
52 telling you to stop, stop. You feel every pain or anything or any sane person.. you're  
53 going to stop. Um, it's basically you against your mind. Your want, your desire against  
54 your mind. And to be honest, that isn't really describing well, unless you're there.. you  
55 have to make the choice.

56 Tim: As runner, when you hit the wall and make the choice, what does it look like?

57 Dena: There's different levels. I mean the choice is to, you have the choice to to put one  
58 foot in front of the other, you have the choice to walk. I mean to finish or not finish is the  
59 first choice. Another choice is to walk or hobble it out. There are finishes where it hurts  
60 as bad to walk as it does to run, so you might as well run. I've dealt with all of them  
61 (Laughter).

62 Tim: When you finish the race it will be another accomplishment.

63 Dena: Oh Yeah. Oh Yeah! Just to know I can do it. It might help build my confidence  
64 more as a runner. Because you're supposed to do 18 weeks of training and I started 14-  
65 12 weeks out and I've been averaging 4 days a week instead of 5 days a week. Maybe it  
66 will build my confidence to know that I can do that.

67 Tim: You also mentioned finishing in Notre Dame Stadium as something you look  
68 forward to.

69 Dena: Yes. There have been a couple people close in my life that were big Notre Dame  
70 fans. So I kind of attributed to them. Both of their names were Joe, so... (Deep Pause).

71 Tim: What do you feel the most rewarding part of this experience will be?

72 Dena: Every time I cross the finish line, to know that I can do it or that I've done it is  
73 rewarding to me. And, even when I, I have a picture from one of my marathons on my  
74 desk right now when I go through a challenge I think that if I can do that then I can do  
75 anything.

76 Tim: The reward is crossing the finish line?

77 Dena: It's a journey too. I learn more about myself in the training process.

78 Tim: For example, what have you learned so far in this training?

79 Dena: Oh, my 18 miler. I blogged about my 18 miler. Ohhh. It was, the wheels came  
80 off at mile 14. I caved, I let the wall beat me. Then I got mad. (Laughter) But really, I  
81 was yelling at myself "you let your head beat you", I finished running it, but I wasn't  
82 happy with it. It just gives you insight to yourself. I say I'm strong, but I can still let  
83 myself beat myself. I'm human! (Laughter)

84 Tim: What do you feel will be the most challenging part of this experience?

85 Dena: For me right now. It's finding, or making the time to train. Making it a priority to  
86 run. I mean I'm working more than I ever had because of work schedule and that. I'm  
87 not used to that. I haven't had to do that in a long time. To put work first and then I have  
88 the family thing. Taking care of the mom and the nephews and I've decided in just the  
89 last two weeks that I going to make the run, for me it's about getting the runs in.



90 Tim: I don't want to put words into your mouth, but it sounds like your sacrificing  
91 certain things.

92 Dena: Yeah. Like the other day I could have stayed at work longer but I said no cause I  
93 had to get my run in. That's because I decided that over the next 4 weeks I'm going to  
94 get all 5 of my runs in each week. I just find that critical for the next four weeks. It's  
95 monster month.

96 Tim: How does the lesson of balance and finding time to run transcend running?

97 Dena: I realize that I can get things done. It helps me schedule better. Um... it helps in  
98 putting myself first. I think sometimes I put myself more important than I really am.

99 (Laughter) Everybody does, but I mean ( ) I realize that I'm not the one that can fix it all.

100 And running helps me other aspects. Sometimes I come up with some of my best ideas  
101 while running. About family.....

102 Tim: Tell me a little more about that.

103 Dena: Things that would erk me you just work out while on a run. A little problem I had,  
104 you just work it out in your head while you run. It's your own time. You don't have a  
105 phone, you don't have a whatever way people get to you. Unless it's a car.

106 Tim: Are you mostly training by yourself?

107 Dena: By myself.

108 Tim: How is it training by yourself?

109 Dena: This is different then my first marathons. It was more of a group thing. The group  
110 would meet for long runs and to be honest, I thought that was easier because it is hard  
111 waking up to run knowing you're not meeting anyone.

112 Tim: When you run with a group what do you do?

113 Dena: You meet and start together and then just go off on all of your different times.  
114 Most of the people wait until everyone has finished before leaving. You can talk about  
115 the run with the group, how it went. You can see each other while your out running.  
116 You're out there and you wave at each other. You can know who is having a good run or  
117 a bad run by seeing them.

118 Tim: When you run by yourself, what do you do?

119 Dena: Put my hat on put my shoes on and go. I do analyze my runs when I done. Like  
120 my past three runs that I have had this week, or four, yes four runs this week, have been  
121 excellent compared to that 18 miler.

122 Tim: When you complete the race you hope to do?

123 Dena: When I complete the race I hope to do another one. I hear that there is one in  
124 Green Bay. I would love to go to Green Bay.

125 Tim: Part of your running is about vacationing.

126 Dena: Oh yeah. There's nothing like seeing a city while on a run.

127 Tim: What else do I need to know about your plans, hopes or desires going into the race?

128 Dena: I'd love to plan for a PR, but I don't think I'm in the shape for it. I want to see  
129 what I got. Not to hurt as much. Like I said about my last one, I want an enjoyable  
130 experience. How about not hitting the wall at mile 16 and having to talk yourself in.

131 Tim: When you hit the wall, tell me about...

132 Dena: I can still remember well! It was a mental fight. At one moment you're telling  
133 yourself to stop and the next to go. It is kind of like you have a split personality at the  
134 moment. At the same time, your body wants to shut down and you're telling it "no!no!"

135 You have to be stubborn. It's like the good angel and the bad angel are sitting on your  
136 shoulders.

137 Tim: How do you choose which one to listen to?

138 Dena: I'm a very stubborn individual. When I say I'm going to do something I do. I  
139 would crawl if I had to.

140 Tim: Thanks for your time.

141

142 Pre-race interview

143 Participant: Meb

144 Date: 02May009

145 Location: Toolen's Running Start

146

147 Tim: What prompted you to decide to run a marathon?

148 Meb: I don't know. I was toying with doing another marathon and then you asked about  
149 the participation in your research. That's about it. I was ready to do another marathon  
150 and this opportunity presented itself. It's been two years.

151 Tim: How many marathons have you run?

152 Meb: Seven.

153 Tim: Counting this one?

154 Meb: Yes, I think so. Six or Seven.

155 Tim: What do you hope to achieve, accomplish or learn through this experience?

156 Meb: Well, as always, I would like to go under 4 hours. Um.. based on my short training  
157 I don't know if that will be possible. We'll certainly try. I'm not optimistic that will  
158 happen.

159 Tim: Your training is short in comparison to what?

160 Meb: Well, I've really had no schedule. I've only seriously been training for about 3  
161 weeks.. 4 weeks.

162 Tim: And we're six weeks out from the race?

163 Meb: Yes. So short compared to normal.

164 Tim: In your previous six or seven marathons how long was your training?

165 Meb: Well we'll have to take St. Louis and throw that out (Laughter). Um.. three  
166 months... four months. It depends on if I built on a previous races training.

167 Tim: You said it has been two years since your last marathon. What was your last  
168 marathon?

169 Meb: Chicago 2007.

170 Tim: What's so magic about four hours?

171 Meb: I don't know. It's kind of like the 20 minute 5k. I've never done it. I'd like to.

172 It's kind of a personal goal, and I think there is kind of a stigma associated with that time,  
173 at least for me. Anyway, I'm sure that's more psychological than anything else.

174 Tim: What effects do you think that this experience will have on your life in general?

175 Meb: Well, Notre Dame really has nothing to do with it at all. I am not a Notre Dame  
176 fan, I'm not really a college sports fan at all. So that doesn't really affect me.

177 Tim: What is it for you?

178 Meb: I think there's a feeling of accomplishment. I know there's a feeling of  
179 accomplishment that I don't get out of much else in life. There is a little pain associated  
180 with it as you know. Yeah you know I'm not an elite runner, but it just feels good to be  
181 able to do that. I'm happy that I'm capable.. well we'll see.

182 Tim: You've finished 6 or 7 marathons, how many have you started?

183 Meb: I've finished every single marathon that I've started. Some have been pretty slow, (  
184 ) very slow. I tried to get on the train. I didn't have any money and my wife wouldn't  
185 give me any (Laughter).

186 Tim: What do you feel the most rewarding part of this experience will be?

187 Meb: Oh I don't know... Like I mentioned before, it's been two years. I've been  
188 reluctant to do one since the episode in Chicago. It's just to get back in that groove again  
189 of running them consecutively. I've been a little gun shy. I actually signed up for  
190 Chicago in 2008, but didn't go. I couldn't get myself to do it. It was hot, so I'm glad I  
191 didn't do it.

192 Tim: What was it like in Chicago in 2007?

193 Meb: It was incredibly hot. I think that is probably the best way to put it. Far hotter than  
194 I was prepared for from a hydration stand point and maybe even a mental standpoint.  
195 Yeah, I was in trouble at about mile 6 at that race.

196 Tim: What does trouble look like?

197 Meb: Um.. well I was already nauseous at 5.5 or 6 and a general feeling of this is not  
198 good and it's going to be a long couple of hours.

199 Tim: You made the choice to keep going?

200 Meb: Well yeah, there's no medal otherwise.

201 Tim: What do you feel will be the most challenging part of this experience?

202 Meb: The heat! I have a real problem with heat.

203 Tim: What is heat to a runner?

204 Meb: To me really, 75-80 degrees with the sun up... if it is cloudy it's a little better, but  
205 yeah I really start to feel it at about 80 degrees. There's not...well... I can't hydrate  
206 enough to overcome that. I just...

207 Tim: This race starts at 6.

208 Meb: Yes. It will be darker for a little bit.

209 Tim: How are you preparing differently for the heat?

210 Meb: Well, I'm not. I've tried everything and it affects me pretty much the same way no  
211 matter what I do, so ( ).

212 Tim: You went on a long run today. How was it?

213 Meb: It wasn't hot, hot, but it definitely warmed up at the end. I could definitely feel the  
214 heat more towards the end of the run.

215 Tim: When you complete the race you hope to do what?

216 Meb: I'm hoping that this will give me my confidence back to continue to do more of  
217 these again.

218 Tim: You gave an example of the wheels coming off. I've also heard this labeled the  
219 wall. Tell me a little about that.

220 Meb: I think the wall is a little bit different for everyone. Umm.. my wall is far more  
221 mental than it is physical. I've got some hang up between my brain and my legs that...  
222 there's just a disconnect. I get tired. I get lazy. Even though physically I'm capable of  
223 continuing. I've had that happen at mile 5 or 6, I have it happen at mile 12, mile 17. You  
224 read a lot where the wall is going to happen. My wall happens whenever I get bored, lazy  
225 or tired. It's very hard for me to get back. You were with me in Memphis, you new I  
226 was capable of continuing on... I just stopped caring.

227 Tim: I remember the end of that race where you had gas in the tank.

228 Meb: Yeah, but I was too late in using it. My biggest challenges re the heat and my  
229 mental issues. Chicago hit in both of these areas.

230 Tim: Anything else you want to share.

231 Meb: No I'm good.

232 Tim: Thanks for your time.

233 Pre-race interview

234 Participant: Pre

235 Date: 26Apr09

236 Location: Pre's House

237

238 Tim: What prompted you to decide to run a marathon?

239 Pre: Um. My Friends. All of my friends were running it so.. That's pretty much how I  
240 decide to run all of my marathons. Whatever my running friends want to run. I have  
241 some marathons that I would like to do, and I'll get to them sooner or later.

242 Tim: What are a couple of those?

243 Pre: Um... I'd like to do the Las Vegas Marathon, just because I like Las Vegas.

244 Eventually I would like to do New York. That's terribly expensive to stay up there.

245 Everybody would like to do Boston. I can't qualify for Boston yet so... I'm going to  
246 have to wait until I'm 40.

247 Tim: What's the difference between now and 40?

248 Pre: the time to qualify goes up. I think that I have to run a 3:10 now and at 40 I would  
249 have to run a 3:20, maybe 3:25. I might have to wait until I am 45 or 50 (Laughter), but  
250 one day I would like to get there. Yeah, well I pretty much run marathons that other  
251 people go to.

252 Tim: Does it have to do with the race itself?

253 Pre: I think it has to do that it I a lot more fun. I run for myself, and for the fitness and I  
254 love to run. But I love the comradery and the whole experience of the marathon. And  
255 it's a lot more fun to experience it with people you are close to. And have more fun



256 because the marathon is a lot more to me than just 26.2 miles. It's the entire weekend.  
257 Um that's why we like to, I like to, my wife and I like to, she is now running half  
258 marathons. We like to make trips out of them. Instead of running St. Louis where it is a  
259 one day thing, it is now a whole weekend thing. Um, I just got finished doing Disney.  
260 It's a way to get away from the house. It's the whole experience of going to the expo,  
261 going to the race, going out to eat with your friends before and afterwards, drinking beers  
262 afterwards. It's like the whole enchilada. That's what makes running marathons fun.  
263 The race is fun in and of itself, you know.

264 Tim: How many marathons have you run so far?

265 Pre: I have run 5. Chicago three times, St. Louis once, just to experience St. Louis, my  
266 hometown marathon. I pretty much ran it with you and another friend of mine. We all  
267 decided that we had to run our hometown marathon once and then Disney World, the  
268 goofy Challenge, and that was in and of itself a unique experience.

269 Tim: What do you hope to achieve, accomplish or learn through this experience?

270 Pre: Um, I ultimately, if everything goes as planned I would like to PR. I would like to  
271 get a personal record. Right now my PR is 3:34. I would really like to run under 3 hours  
272 and 30 minutes for the marathon. I had set out to do that in 2006 and in 2007 at Chicago.  
273 In 2006 is where I got my 3:34 and I just didn't have anything left in the tank. In 2007  
274 was the melt down.. um.. the heat wave, so that wasn't going to happen. Ultimately, I'd  
275 like to, my training is really good right now coming off of Disney and I'm not hurt. I'd  
276 actually like to try to PR this marathon. So I think that's my main goal. But if I don't,  
277 not big deal. There are more to come after this.

278 Tim: What effects do you think that this experience will have on your life in general?

279 Pre: Well ( ) obviously ( ) it's just another accomplishment that I can, you know, every  
280 marathon is an accomplishment. But when you set to do something that you have never  
281 done before and to go faster than you have ever gone before... I think that it just shows  
282 myself that I'm capable of doing something that's very difficult. You know, something  
283 that you put a lot of hard work into. I normally train for 18 weeks, but this training is  
284 more like 14 weeks because I'm coming off being trained for Disney. You work all that  
285 time and you do all of those long runs, and it culminates into a real positive outcome and  
286 it is a fantastic thing. You feel good about it and you move on with life. Selfishly, it  
287 make you feel good.

288 Tim: What do you feel the most rewarding part of this experience will be?

289 Pre: I think ( ) just getting another one under my belt, and hopefully if I PR then that will  
290 be rewarding. Another side rewarding thing is that Mara is running the half marathon.  
291 So it's another opportunity to share my running with her. It's another opportunity to go  
292 on a trip, to spend time with all of my friends, and to run with them. To share stories and  
293 all of that. I'm looking forward to going up to Notre Dame. I think that is a really neat  
294 place. There's a lot to see up there. I think it will be very neat to go into the stadium—to  
295 the 50 yard line. Another fun place to run.

296 Tim: Now that your wife is starting run. Are the conversations about running a little bit  
297 different?

298 Pre: Oh yeah. She understands running a lot more. Before when she didn't run, going out  
299 for 3 or 4 hours on a Saturday or Sunday morning and running 20 miles or ten miles.. she  
300 new I liked it and she was supportive of it, but as soon as I was done it was “ alright what  
301 are we doing the rest of the day.” And a she really didn't have a grasp on the toll it took

302 on your body and that you probably weren't going to be raring to go for the rest of the  
303 day. Well now that she's running she knows that after a long run she's beat. She knows,  
304 she can relate to some of the things that I've done. She can relate to all of the hard work  
305 you put into everything. She appreciated it before, but you can't truly appreciate running  
306 and running long distances until you actually do it yourself. With her doing Disney and  
307 now doing this, I think she now appreciates the work that I've put into it and the work she  
308 puts into it...and the amount of work you have to put into it just to get there. Just to get  
309 to the line. 26.2 miles is the end. Everything leading up to it is the beginning. And  
310 everything leading up to it is all of the hard work. It is kind of like taking a final. You  
311 know it's not the final of the class it's the 12 or 18 weeks you put into that class and  
312 that's the hard part. The final is the easy part.

313 Tim: What do you feel will be the most challenging part of this experience?

314 Pre: Time. Training for it is time constraints. Each marathon it gets tougher and tougher.  
315 I have three kids, um and now Mara is running so we've had to split time. I've had to cut  
316 runs short on Saturday mornings thinking that I need to get home so I can watch the kids  
317 so Mara can do her long run. Um..That's tough! Working full time, 40 hours a week,  
318 and being on call because I am a detective. Some weekends I'm on call, so I can't run  
319 very far away from the house. I have to semi-close and carry my phone with me in case  
320 something happens. It doesn't happen a lot, but it does happen. Now with it being spring  
321 time and training, Max is starting baseball. So we have baseball practices and games 2  
322 days a week.. sometimes three days a week. With the kids in school, it is tough to get up  
323 in the morning for a run. Mara usually gets up in the morning and does her runs. So, I  
324 have to fit mine in at night. And with the extra curricular activities for the kids it's just

325 tough. I think it will just get tougher as the kids get more involved with other activities.  
326 That's probably the toughest part. The toughest part of this marathon is just finding the  
327 time to do everything. The time is there, I just don't always take the time. You're tired  
328 after the day. I mean you work all day and you're just tired. You don't want to go out  
329 for a run. Sometimes you just don't go out and do it.

330 Tim: What do you think will be the hardest part about race day itself?

331 Pre: mmm ( ) I think that the heat could play a factor. It's going to be June 6<sup>th</sup> or  
332 whatever. I'm actually.. that's probably the one thing that I'm most worried about. If it's  
333 a hot day, you know a lot of the training we've been doing is in the cool weather. So it's  
334 tough to acclimate. So I hope over the next few weeks I can get acclimated to the heat a  
335 little bit better because if you don't get acclimated to the heat and it's hot .. you just melt  
336 and it's horrible. I think that my biggest concern. For the most part, it won't be too bad.  
337 The kids are going up there with us on race day, but we're brining Mara's mom and dad,  
338 so they're going to watch the kids. And I should be ready, I don't know what the curse  
339 looks like. This will be a little different because I think that I will be running the  
340 majority of the race by myself. In marathons past, I've always ran with somebody at  
341 least for part of the race... half of the race. So this might be a little different because I  
342 don't know how many people they have out on the course, how many spectators. There  
343 might be a lot of alone time. Um.. that's just something you have to get used to. Nobody  
344 there to push through with, but myself. I've been running a lot more by myself to try and  
345 get ready for that.

346 Tim: Other runners have talked about hitting the wall. What does the wall mean to you?

347 Pre: Usually, if I hit the wall it means that I've cramped. My legs won't go anymore.

348 Umm.. I've hit the wall a few times and that is where my body just breaks down, and I

349 physically can't go any further. I've fortunately in a big race, I've gotten super tired, but

350 I just keep going. I just keep going. When I hit the wall I cramp up and I get pains. It's

351 happened a couple of times where I actually came off the road and just stop or slow down.

352 Usually it happens to me in the last 6 miles or so. I feel like I can't do anything more

353 and no matter how much Gatorade I take, no matter how much GU I take, no matter how

354 much.. my body just doesn't want to go.

355 Tim: When you say you walked off, did you come back on the course?

356 Pre: Yes. I will finish every marathon that I am physically capable of. I will walk 20

357 miles if I have to. If I go out there, my goal is to at least finish. I never want to drop out

358 of a marathon. No that people who drop out are bad. I will finish every race I start

359 unless I have a medical problem.

360 Tim: You experienced the heat and people not physically able to finish in Chicago 2007.

361 Pre: Yes. It was awful, and I saw people pass out. I saw people on the side of the road

362 being helped and laying there half-dead looking. I obviously don't blame them if they

363 weren't able to finish. But I see on TV some of these world-class athletes and the race

364 isn't going the way they want it to go so they stop. You know.. and I think.. I just think

365 that it is disrespectful to all of the people.. and I know they have different circumstances

366 surrounding them, but it's almost like, just because you can't get what you wanted at the

367 beginning of that day, doesn't mean you need to stop and drop out of the race. There are

368 10,000 other people that would love to run the time you were going to run that day. And

369 they would give almost anything to run as fast as you. There are people trucking along at

370 6 and 7 hours out there.. why are they any different than anyone else out there. You just  
371 have to swallow you're pride in come in at whatever time it is for that day.. for that race.  
372 At least I finished and that is what everyone out there is trying to do. Respect the race,  
373 respect the marathon, respect everyone that is running. You don't drop out for silly  
374 reasons. That's the main thing.

375 Tim: Have your kids actually seen you finish one of these races?

376 Pre: Never, my kids have never seen me finish a race. All three times in Chicago, we  
377 didn't go with the kids. In St. Louis, you and me finished and neither of our families  
378 were there. In Disney Mara was there. Yeah my kids have never seem it so, it will be  
379 interesting for the kids to see another side of me. The exhausted person.. They've seen  
380 me finish 5ks, but never a marathon.

381 Tim: When you complete the race you hope to?

382 Pre: I hope to still be walking. I hope to not be injured. That's a big thing. I'd love to  
383 not be injured. Because I love running and when your injured.. I've been injured a few  
384 times after a marathon and it puts a damper on it.

385 Tim: Anything else you want to add?

386 Pre: No, did anyone else add anything.

387 Tim: You're good. Thanks for your time.

388

389 Pre-race interview

390 Participant: Jimmy

391 Date: 20Apr09

392 Location: Toolen's Running Start

393

394 Tim: What prompted you to decide to run a marathon?\

395 Jimmy: A marathon?

396 Tim: The one you're signed up for.

397 Jimmy: Notre Dame? Notre Dame. Finishing on the 50 yard line of Notre Dame

398 Stadium. I've been crazy about Notre Dame for... well.. How old am I? 64. (Laughter)

399 50 years at least I would say.

400 Tim: The only way you're going to see Notre Dame is to run to the 50 yard line?

401 Jimmy: You're right. There's no way to even get on the field. I/m mean what else, how

402 good could it get? That's gotta be... well I can't wait. I get goose bumps just thinking

403 about it. But I can't wait to do it. The only problem is that I have to run 26.2 miles

404 (laughter). That's a problem. Yeah, but ever since I heard of that one, I've wanted to go

405 and do it. I think it's going to be neat.

406 Tim: What do you think you're going to accomplish or learn from this marathon?

407 Jimmy: Well... What I'm going to learn is 1. How my training went, how.. if I did well

408 in my training or not. I'm only dong two 20-milers instead of doing three or four, but I

409 haven't run a marathon in a year. And hopefully I will be hydrated more in this one. And

410 I won't hit the wall or the fence or, and I'll be a lot more smarter. I want to finish in one..

411 in good shape so we can get up and have a party afterward.

412 Tim: Nice.... So what caused you to change your training regiment down form two 20s  
413 from three or four?

414 Jimmy: Time. We a .. well we just ran a couple of halves. You know we did the Illinois  
415 half. And the weather's been terrible, so... My schedule has been run a long run, take it  
416 easy, run a long run take it easy, run a long run....but the longest run.. I've done 18 twice  
417 and 16 a couple of times so it's not like I haven't had any long runs, but I haven't had a  
418 20, you know the magical 20 milers. I thought Paula was going to kill me running 18. I  
419 just like. Mentally I'm more prepared when I run three 20s.

420 Tim: You said Paula is killing you. Is that (interrupted)?

421 Jimmy: We actually ran 16 yesterday and I finally got over... ah what do you call it? Not  
422 the disappointment, but the reality that she is faster than me. So she needs to train harder  
423 and I don't care now if she picks it up. I used to try to stay with her... you know when  
424 you try to run with someone faster..you know how it is. You try to stay with them and  
425 then you kill yourself. Well yesterday... the week before we ran 18 and I stayed with her  
426 pretty much most of the time. Yesterday I would stay with her for about two miles and  
427 then I would say "OK (Laughter) I'm not going to run this fast." And she just puts it into  
428 another gear and takes off. But she would stop after a mile.. she would only be a little  
429 ahead of me.. she would stop and wait for me. Then we take off again and it would  
430 happen again. So I didn't get upset. I said fine.. I don't have that gear. I don't want to  
431 do that gear. Maybe in a race I do, but not while I'm training. You know I've got to be  
432 enjoying it.

433 Tim: It's always nice to breathe when you're enjoying something.

434 Jimmy: Yeah! Be able to breathe and look at the sites and... (Laughter).



435 Tim: Where have you been running at?

436 Jimmy: Yesterday we ran at Forest Park. The week before, we started at Forest Park,, we  
437 went down to the marathon expo.. Go St. Louis!.. Walked around there, got some sports  
438 beans and then we took off for downtown. Actually we went on the course for a little bit.  
439 And then we went downtown St. Louis, hit the Arch and then we out on the trail that runs  
440 along the river, then we came back and ran across the Eads Bridge almost into East St.  
441 Louis, turned around and came back and then we ran all the way back to Forest Park. It  
442 was 18 miles.

443 Tim: That's a long run.

444 Jimmy: Yah, there was a lot of stop and go which isn't real good. But it was, you know,  
445 it was still good, and I was glad it was over with. (Laughter) When I got done I was  
446 happy.

447 Tim: What effects do you think that this experience will have on your life in general?

448 Jimmy: I can finally say that I went to Notre Dame! And be part of that University.. you  
449 know I always wanted to go to school there but there was no way in hell that I was going  
450 to go to school there (Laughter) at Notre Dame. But I think that is something that I can't  
451 wait to do.

452 Tim: Is there something special about being at Notre Dame with a running community?

453 Jimmy: Yeah I think that's twice as good. You know, ah...Our buddy Dennis Hatch told  
454 me, since I've never been to Notre Dame, he said "Jimmy, I'll take you to see a football  
455 game there" I said that would be great, but I think running on the field would be better  
456 than going to a football game. You know, after running on the field at Memorial Stadium  
457 last week, or two weeks ago, that was great. I can't imagine the feeling of going into

458 Notre Dame Stadium. That's gotta to be awesome. But... It depends on how I feel at that  
459 point. (laughter) I might not be able to stand up, but we'll see.

460 Tim: What do you feel the most rewarding part of this experience will be?

461 Jimmy: Finishing at Notre Dame stadium, definitely finishing in the stadium.

462 Tim: What do you feel will be the most challenging part of this experience?

463 Jimmy: Probably.. ah well ( ) you know Dennis Hatch said that t has been warm, so  
464 getting for the heat. You know you don't think of June as being that hot, but if you look  
465 at some of the races we've had in St. Louis, the Zoo Run, it seems like it is always hot.  
466 So , and he says that there's hills, I just can't .. the hills really don't bother me, but I'm  
467 thinking of the last time that I ran Boston the hills killed me, and I do not want to walk  
468 through any water stops... or walk on any hills.

469 Tim: Why is that?

470 Jimmy: Because I feel that mentally that once you walk up a hill.. your body says OK  
471 dummy, you're at another hill, you're trying to run, WALK! And I think that mentally  
472 once you get into that routine then you can't get out of it. As much as you wan to run up  
473 the hill, you can't. At least that's what happens to me. When I say .. you know.. stop  
474 dummy let's just walk up the hill, then I have to walk up every hill. Just like walking  
475 through a water stop. Once you do it the first time, you can't wait to do it the second, the  
476 third the fourth... (Laughter). Right?

477 Tim: Wish to say that I didn't know that, but..... (Laughter)

478 Jimmy: That's me.. I can't say that's how it is for everybody, but I can vow that there are  
479 a ton of people that I talked to that the same thing happens to them. So...

480 Tim: Do you find that in other aspects of things you do out side of running?

481 Jimmy: Ah.. ( ) you know I think that I'm really determined as a runner but I don't think  
482 that anything compares to doing a marathon. I think I have a.. working in the store,  
483 working with the public you have to have a level of self control, and I guess it's kinda  
484 like running a marathon. Working 8, 10, 12 hours of the day, but working with the  
485 public.. ah, but you can walk into the back and forget it, where as a marathon you still  
486 have to go 26 miles no matter what. So I don't think that anything compares to it.

487 Tim: You said that the heat was kind of a challenge.

488 Jimmy: Well you know, if I don't hydrate then.. you know running 16 yesterday ah we  
489 stopped a couple of times for water, but all last night, well I cut the grass last night, but  
490 all of last night my toes were cramping up. I think I only peed once last night so I know  
491 that I was dehydrated. But... drinking Diet Coke and three beers probably didn't help me  
492 either, but that's OK.

493 Tim: Give or take a couple, how many marathons have you run?

494 Jimmy: I, I think that I'm up to 34 or 35, somewhere up in that range. I need to go back  
495 and look and count them, at one time I went back and did not count of my Team in  
496 Training ones but I think I should... Lynn told me I should. Those are always.. I didn't  
497 race those, but I ran over thirty miles in each one of them.

498 Tim: Say a little more about that.

499 Jimmy: What I did as a coach, not all coaches would do this, but as a coach I would start  
500 off with the people, the majority of them. You know, run a couple of miles with the  
501 faster people, fall back, run a couple of miles with slower people and go back and forth.  
502 And then I would cut over to the middle of the course and meet people and run with  
503 them. Then I would go over to the end of the course and sometimes I would have to run

504 from 13 to 20 or 13 to 26 with them. So um ah, then for the next 4 hours I would go from  
505 mile 25 back to pick people up and take them to the finish line. In the last two Dublin  
506 Marathons with Team in Training I know that I ran 37 miles and 38 miles. One was 8  
507 hours and 7 minutes that I was out there and the second was 8 hours and 37 minutes.  
508 And that kinda sticks in your mind, but I can tell you exactly the last people I ran in with  
509 on both marathons.

510 Tim: What stuck in your mind on that?

511 Jimmy: How long it was (Laughter). Being out there, it's not only being on the course  
512 for so long, but I also got to the start line with everybody and hour to an hour and a half  
513 before the start of the race. Just preparing people to get ready for the marathon.. so it was  
514 a long day for us.. for me, but it's part of Team in Training which is a very rewarding  
515 experience. Even though it kills you (Laughter). ( ) but I know it's somewhere in the  
516 mid 30s.

517 Tim: Has any one marathon been like another?

518 Jimmy: Ah ( ) well ( ) I guess a couple of them really stand out, but then there's another  
519 couple that stands out. I guess there's... After I ran my first one in 3:57:33, which you  
520 never forget your first one. My first 10 were St. Louis. After that I really thought I  
521 became a runner. But then even after I ran four or five of them in the four hours.. you  
522 know 4:30, 4:40.. because my knee was going to go out. And I got a little serious about  
523 running and I ran 3 hours and 42 seconds. Then the second year I won the masters  
524 division, I won \$500, I thought that was pretty cool, and then the next year I thought I  
525 was in better shape and I ran a 3:12. But it was 80 degrees out that day. Those stick out  
526 and then everyone of the Chicago's stick out to me. I can tell you each one of them.

527 Tim: And your fasted race is?

528 Jimmy: 2:58:51. In 2001 because we did Boston in 2002.

529 Tim: Many folks think crossing the finish line of one marathon makes them a runner, but  
530 it was until after 10 when you saw yourself as a runner.....

531 Jimmy: You have to define what it means to be a runner. I had a couple of plateaus.

532 After a couple of years I got a good pair of running shoes. Then I thought.. now I think

533 I'm a runner. Then I ran with a couple of guys from work and they would talk about

534 running... back then everything was a 10K race there were no 5ks. And I ran with a

535 couple of guys that were always running 38 and 39 minute 10ks and I was running 42,

536 43, 44, and I thought man if I could ever break 40 minutes then I would be a runner.

537 When I did, I finally decided that I was a runner. That's what got me over the hump, and

538 then once you got that fast, once I broke 40 minutes I thought that I became a runner.

539 Running marathons are just a ( ) you know I don't think age has anything to do with it, I

540 think its just about your determination and your training.

541 Tim: With this race in particular, what do you think will be the biggest challenge for

542 you?

543 Jimmy: Ah, probable the heat because as you know the last couple of marathons I've had

544 problems with the heat and dehydration. I think those are going to be the biggest

545 problems. And not to get too excited about going to the finish line. (Laughter) maybe

546 that might be my biggest challenge! You know, I've got many steps in the marathon and

547 I have to make sure that I take it one step at a time.

548 Tim: Please finish the statement. When you complete the race you hope to do what?

549 Jimmy: I hope to ah ( ) I hope to be standing on the 50 yard line in one piece. Not  
550 throwing up, and just to say that I .. this is it. I'm inside of Notre Dame Stadium. I can  
551 enjoy it. I think that's the biggest thing.

552 Tim: You've got a small group of folks running with you... (interrupted)

553 Jimmy: Yeah I hope everybody feels the same way I do.. I don't think anybody is as big  
554 of a Notre dame fan as I am, you know that's running with us, if they are I'd be shocked.

555 (Laughter) I just don't think they are. But ah.. they probably don't realize how much I  
556 like Notre Dame. I have like it all my life. But it's going to be neat to see everybody.

557 The last couple of marathons we haven't had a large group so I think it is going to be a lot  
558 of fun.

559 Tim: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

560 Jimmy: I'm a little concerned about my knees right now. And I guess that's my biggest  
561 concern. I'm not worried about the training.. As far as marathons go the training is the  
562 toughest part. And I like the training because you get to run with a bunch of people and  
563 um you know it's so much fun training with a group. I can't imagine doing like I used  
564 to.. running by myself. That's how we used to train for marathons, any race. I didn't  
565 have groups like I do now. I pity the poor people that have to train, day in and day out,  
566 all of their long runs by themselves. We just had that young kid from O'fallon that just  
567 did the U of I marathon. He ran a 2:52 , he's 24 and was a real good cross-country  
568 runner, but still everyone of his long runs were by himself. He'd come in, it's kinda neat,  
569 that's one of the reasons I lucky to have this store, there are tons of people who come in  
570 and talk with me about the preparation, what they should be doing, what they shouldn't  
571 be doing and then the real satisfaction of them coming back here after the race. Going

572 over their experiences what they should have done, what they did do, what I told them  
573 what to expect. I had a girl come in here last week and she did the half. She was so  
574 excited, she had her medal on. She just showed up and said ‘Thanks’. She held up her  
575 medal and said see, I did it. I’ve had people, especially Team in Training, who come to  
576 the store and talk about their experiences before they even went home to their family. So  
577 I think that’s pretty unique and pretty awesome to see that many people so excited about..  
578 you know they completed in their lives. They might not ever do another race.

579 Tim: What do people miss out on when they train by themselves?

580 Jimmy: Sharing the experience of the pain, the time goes by so much faster when you’re  
581 running with people. And you know, when you’re running with people and everyone is  
582 talking, 1. It takes your mind off of running. 2. If you have something hurting you, you  
583 run through the pain and then you forget it. Unless it’s very serious, but there’s so much  
584 more enjoyment running with somebody. It’s a totally different experience.

585 Tim: I appreciate your time and look forward to running with you in the near future.

## Appendix C: Participant Journals

1 Dena's Journal  
2

### Question Questions Questions and Freaking out

*Sub-chapter:* 26.2 again?      *Date Referenced:* -      *Date Written:* Apr  
23, 2009

3 Well here I am less than 7 weeks away from the big day and how am I feeling about the  
4 big 26.2 in my future, well to sum it up uncertain!

5 Welcome to the inside of kraussy's brain during the 5 mile run today:

6 Cardinal game was fun!!, maybe I should not have had the beer. Man, I have been  
7 having serious motivation issues.... when I sign up I knew I was starting the training a  
8 little late but believed that I could go hard core and get in shape by june. Then work got  
9 busy, very very busy.... I don't remember ever being this busy at work or working this  
10 much for this long of period...stupid work....when I get home all I want to do is sit in my  
11 safety zone the Lazyboy. All is good there. I must keep going to the park for runs after  
12 work before going home. I have been running on average 4 days a week when I know I  
13 should be running 5 which has me freaking out a bit. I such a slacker but I got 16 miles  
14 in two weeks ago it went alright but 16 is 10 less than 26..... " Am I running enough  
15 miles during the week"..... I have cut but my training miles to mirror the amount I did for  
16 my first marathon.... will this actually help me??? Man my feet hurt, this PF sucks! Will  
17 they hold out for 7 weeks.... should I trying running in AM before work and dress shoes,  
18 switch to a different brand of runnning shoes???? Ok kraussy quit freaking..... these 4  
19 weeks are critical.... I will get all my runs in beer and sleep be damn, It can't be a choice  
20 anymore!!! It what I have to do..... Hey I 'm almost home just need to get across this  
21 busy street.... Please no train...don't want to stop..... Sweet I'm done ..... Maybe I'll cut  
22 the grass now... I have that 18 miler this weekend.....Peace out

23 Stay tune

24



## sleep, Ipod, sun, vending machine, and the power aid slushy

*Sub-chapter: 18 sucks*

*Date Referenced: -*

*Date Written: Apr  
26, 2009*

- 25 Well to sum up this 18 miler..... it just sucked!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- 26 This reminded me of a 17 miler I had when training for Chicago in 2006.... which wasn't  
27 pretty either.
- 28 I over slept so I didn't start until 8:30 usually not a big deal in April but is was 70 degree  
29 and the sphere of death was already out..... not good.
- 30 My ipod died at mile 3 leaving to only to be lost in my thoughts..... I really let my head  
31 beat me today!! It was one of those days I felt every pain..... I really hit the wall today at  
32 mile 11 ish..... but i tried gutting it out till about 14.5, then the wheels feel off I began to  
33 walk long segments.....Got back to the Metro station with 3 mile left to go and no water  
34 left,,, I may have been hurting and walking but I was suppose to do 18 so I was going to  
35 finish 18 somehow..... I went to the vending machine got a power aid.... and began  
36 walking the other direction with the goal of getting a 1.5 miles in and turning around. I  
37 walk alot during that mile and half..... I got mad at myself and ran a bit... but finish that  
38 mile and half walking..... Then I hit it turn around and began to run back to where my  
39 truck was..... I ran for about .60 mile then walk a bit but I already made a deal with  
40 myself that I would run up the big hill by south side park.... I made it alll the way up and  
41 walked some more.....Then I sucked it up and finished the last quarter of the 18 miler  
42 running! I proceeded to my truck got in and went to SONIC for a Power aid Slushy!!!
- 43 Lessons Learned: Must start before sun comes up on warm days.
- 44 Motrin should be brought along on the run.
- 45 Don't let my head have the power.
- 46 Need to start taking the salt.
- 47 Hopefully my next long run will go better.
- 48

### **False sense of security... what a difference .....**

**Sub-chapter:** *False sense of security* **Date Referenced:** -

**Date Written:** *Apr 30, 2009*

49 WOW!!! oh WOW

50 it's amazing what happen when the sphere of death isn't out for a few days.... ok and  
51 subtract the 12 additional miles from the horrible 18er I had this weekend.

52 Anyway this week been going well i gotten all three of my runs in this week so far; 2 6  
53 milers and a 7 miler... all have gone pretty well for running..... I would love to get  
54 confident for the big 20 miler this weekend but weekend but you never know whats going  
55 to happen.....

56 So thoughts from my week of running:

57 1. Got new shoes!!!!!! new shoes fix all just ask Toolen.

58 2. I actually put my runs first this week, before work and even before family needs.... and  
59 you know what, I still got the work I needed to get done, and for the family stuff I  
60 actually told them I needed to run and you know what the world didn't end..... it was ok  
61 to help/spend quality time after my run. This has been a real eye opener for me.

62 3. Sun is bad....really haven't seen it since sunday's 18..... and runs have been nice.

63 4. Not fooling myself for this weekend's 20 ..... a little nervous,s about it

64 5. Work is going to be crazy next week must continue to remind myself that these runs  
65 are very important and put myself first. i don't do that alot.

66 6. I wish I could run again and have no PF issues..... It really varies on the day or the  
67 run...guess I should suck it up and stretch.. or I think i need to find different dress shoe

68 7. Oh yea I have tomorrow

69 off!! no run  
70 day!!

71 peace out talk to ya after that damn 20.

72

**one 20 Down!!!**

**Sub-chapter:** *What a difference a run makes*

**Date Referenced:** -

**Date Written:** *May 2, 2009*

73 So wow what a difference a week makes, finished my first 20 milers of the training and  
74 it's wasn't horrible!!!!!! It was nothing like the 18 miler last week. The run pretty much  
75 was perfect as you can go for running.... Expect for my IPOD not working... Please a  
76 moment of silence, I believe he is dead..... but even that didn't ruin my run! I began to  
77 hurt towards the end but who doesn't after running 16 miles... and looking a 4 more.

78 Tim met me 11miles into my run and kept me company for 4 miles, it was nice to have  
79 company. I did start into my normal freak out mode when someone runs with me though.  
80 I start to make it all about them no matter what they say or do. Am I holding them back,  
81 should i run faster for them, etc.. are all thing I struggle with along with the ability  
82 to breathe cause I'm usually the slow one in these situations. But I noticed Tim did not  
83 have his Garmin on that's when I realized he was just there to observe and keep  
84 me company. But it so hard to break habit of making it about other people for example:  
85 When Tim and I turn around to head back to his car, we were walking and we kept  
86 walking..... Now going through my head is "Tim really doesn't walk much why are we  
87 walking" it's then that it dawned on me, this was my run, it all about me and we would  
88 run when I chose to....with that I started to run or should I say we started to.

89 As I stated the run went really well and I was aware that is was a good one while running  
90 but that just plagued my mind with what did I do this time that made it so much better.  
91 When I know while I sit here and type this sometimes the runner can do everything right  
92 and just have a bad run.

93 **Thoughts during the run**

94 - I did get all my 3 of weekday runs in this week... did this help.

95 -The start time was much early this weekend, 6:15 instead of 8:30 which probably help  
96 out a bit with the sphere of death really being out despite what the weather men told me.  
97 This probably did help.

98 - The weather was much nicer, it was 52 degrees when I started... not much humidity.

99 - I met with Tim for my interview on Thursday night, where we talked about running for  
100 awhile, and ran into other friends that run, started thinking about run Memphis in  
101 December..... Did this give me the runner high and provide some motivation that I was  
102 lacking earlier..... Probably so.

103 - Last night I was a good girl, ate some pasta early and was in bed by 10.....

104 - Oh yea, I did get new shoes, and was wearing them... Maybe Toolen is right!!

105

## Maybe I'm in better shape than I think

*Sub-chapter: Running  
running and running*

*Date Referenced: -*

*Date Written: May 8,  
2009*

106 So I have gotten all my 3 week day runs in ...good Dena!!

107 The runs have gone well, it's the getting to the running that's the constant debate this  
108 week..... thankfully the running part of mind as won these debates so far... I really don't  
109 know why either last week was a strong running week for me, got all my runs in, my 20  
110 miler on Saturday was pretty good one for a 20 miler, I ran a 5k race on Sunday in under  
111 29 minutes which trust me I haven't seen in way over a year and I ran 20 the day before.  
112 However I did have "Teenwolf" running with me during the race pushing me and playing  
113 with my pace... again I know making the run about someone else. but I still did it so that  
114 should make me be all gun ho right???? Not so much but I have two runs left... let you  
115 know how they turn out.

116 Maybe my lack of wanting to run is involved in my mood. I've been really cranky this  
117 week. I had to break some news I've been avoiding and Everything else just seems to hit  
118 me wrong and then I dwell on it and dwell and take things personal which I shouldn't.....  
119 you would think all this would make me want to run but it hasn't.....During my runs  
120 though I have tried to let the things bothering me go and have myself pretty much almost  
121 talked into it, and after the run i feel better almost stress free except for that June 6th  
122 running a marathon thing..... But the next morning comes and I'm stressed again, and  
123 cranky.....

124 I'm just have one of those weeks I guess.... well a new monday right around the  
125 calendar..... which mean I have another 20 coming soon!

126

### **My week : sneezing, coughing, running a 20**

**Sub-chapter:** *My week :*      **Date Referenced:** -  
*sneezing, coughing, running a*  
*20*

**Date Written:** *May*  
*16, 2009*

- 127 So I woke up Sunday with a headache that wouldn't leave..... I still went out for my run  
 128 cause I'm training for a marathon that what I do.....
- 129 Monday: the sneezing, coughing started and yes the headache was still there. But no big  
 130 deal Monday is an off running day.
- 131 Tuesday: Sneezing, coughing, headache, fever (i think), and my joints ached..... so I  
 132 decide to skipped my running for a 8 pm bedtime with a shot of nighttime cold stuff.
- 133 Wednesday: I actually felt alive but still ached a bit but was really tired.... everything  
 134 decided to move to my lungs... the coughing will not stop..... I decided not to run but  
 135 sleep again... I feel guilty about skipping it but this chest cold.
- 136 Thursday: Coughing still....felt much better almost human, went out for 6 mile run.... the  
 137 lungs were heavy with all the crap that moved in... only one coughing fit during it....  
 138 dwelt on missing wednesday run.
- 139 Friday: After work went out for a 6 mile run, still coughing .... dwelt on the missing run  
 140 and the 20 I was going to run saturday..... hoping it won't be horrible
- 141 So today, I ran my second and last 20 of this training.... and it went pretty well for a 20, it  
 142 wasn't the best I ever had but it wasn't horrible.... I took it pretty easy since the lungs and  
 143 coughing thing.....
- 144 SO I'm in taper which I'm happy about.... but I now freaking..... AM I Really ready for  
 145 this???? I guess I'll find out in 3 weeks.
- 146
- 147

## Life's about choices

*Sub-chapter: Life's about choices*

*Date Referenced: -*

*Date Written: May 20, 2009*

148 A good friend of mine always says Life's about choices.... I will and want to write more  
149 about this later sometime but for right now it's just a good intro to this entry....

150 This whole training is about making the choice to run even when I don't want to..... Now  
151 I'd love to say that I always chose to run since that's what you have to do for marathon  
152 training but I haven't. I know that it's I alone who have made those choices not to run.....  
153 so we'll see how it goes in on June 6.

154 Anyway, I had another running choice / debate today. My 6 mile run at 8:30 last night  
155 didn't go well... I hurt, it seemed to go on and on, and I ran it really slow about 5-6  
156 minutes slower than I usually run a 6er in. Then my PF began to make it presence known  
157 when I got done and continue to remind me all day long that it hasn't gone away. All day  
158 long I debated myself: "I'm in taper skipping one more won't hurt, it's a little warm, the  
159 rest will do the PF good"(said the lazyboy talking on my right shoulder), "You haven't  
160 had a full 18 weeks of training more like 12 and then you have missed a bunch of days  
161 during those 122 weeks" (said A little Toolen sitting on my left shoulder).... What did I  
162 do??

163 Well I chose to run! I went to CC park and start out, there was a wind coming off the  
164 lake, people were out, my IPOD decided to work today... anyway 6 miles later, I have to  
165 say it was a great run probably one of the best I have had in a long while... I actually  
166 almost enjoyed it, I felt pretty much pain free.... This run reminded me why I run. And I  
167 really needed that after last week of the sickness.

168 Anyway like Forrest says "You never know what you're going to get", I lucked out today.

169 Peace out

170

### a 4, 12 that turn in 13, and another 4

**Sub-chapter:** a 4, 12 that turn  
in 13, and another 4

**Date Referenced:** -  
**Date Written:** May  
26, 2009

171 So that finished my week of running for the 18 May 09. I got all my runs in SWEET...

172 Ran a 4 Friday night. a 13 which suppose to be a 12 Saturday but that was with my an  
173 old friend who I don't get to talk to allot so I didn't mind have the company and/or the  
174 extra mile. She's running the half and we talked the whole way I know some people will  
175 think this last statement is not right but I had a good time running the 13. She's going  
176 through what I am, during our run She stated "I don't understand how I can run 10 this  
177 week, go down to 6 next and be ready to run 13.1 the following". And as I started to give  
178 the reasons / pep talk ..... I realized later that's what I'm doing. Earlier this week I was  
179 determined to run a higher mile week, since a didn't have a FULL Marathon training....  
180 Thankfully a good friend point out that was stupid.... he stated facts I knew "You have  
181 had 2 decent 20s let your body heal." Funny 3 days later I was passing that same theme  
182 message on.

183 Thoughts - I feel like I'm in some sort shape finally but maybe I just had a good week of  
184 running. Its taper time when every pain is judge and felt, I begin to doubt if I've done  
185 enough. But I have decided I'm probably ready for this thing. I'm just going to have to  
186 keep reminding myself that I believe I am ready over the next two weeks. I'm not going  
187 to break my PR but this marathon isn't or has not been about that for me. The last two  
188 marathons have not been the best experience Chicago 2007 (baked me alive) and Disney  
189 2009 (hit wall at mile 10--sucked). I really just want a good / decent experience. I'm  
190 even planning in my head for the next marathon but let see how it goes in 2 weeks.

191



## **Taper to the extreme for the week of 25 May 09**

**Sub-chapter:** *Taper to the extreme*      **Date Referenced:** -

**Date Written:** *Jun 4, 2009*

192 So I may have taken the taper a little to far this week..... cause I only ran twice!! I ran a 8  
193 on Saturday and a 4 on Sunday. Ouch that hurt to type. This is where I could start typing  
194 the excuses.. work was crazy busy, the storm on Tuesday... but it all comes down to I  
195 made the decision not to run.... On Monday well cause it Monday.... kind of went like  
196 that for the whole week.

197 I did have a kind of dawning moment at the end of my Saturday run... at 7.89 miles...

198 You see I have said all to myself and others this marathon has nothing to do with time I  
199 just want a nice experience which I do and honestly really do.

200 But for some reason this whole training I have been running slower... which let face it I  
201 am not the faster speed demon, but I am running slower for me ..... and every run it is a  
202 consistent slower. Which bothers me. Probably because I'm comparing myself to the  
203 2006 self which was in much better shape. Anyway I've really been beating myself up  
204 about that.... making me cranky even on my short runs... So here it was Saturday I almost  
205 done with my 8 miles the weekend before the marathon and I'm not excited. I'm cranky  
206 about being slower!! Then at 7.89 mile a mere .11 from home a man in my neighbor was  
207 getting ready to the cross the street said to me "Don't you ever get sick of running?" , I  
208 responded back one of my typically responses that "That I like to eat more". But it twas  
209 there that it hit me, my neighbors don't know how fast I run or care... They just know I  
210 run. This exchange put me in a really good mood for my last .11. I have decided that  
211 maybe I should let go of 2006 Dena. It will be hard, but I have decided to lock her in a  
212 truck until after 06Jun09.... Then maybe she can come out and play when I train for my  
213 next one which will be the full 18 schedule.

214

215 Peace

## Where's the body glide

**Sub-chapter:** *Where's the  
body glide*

**Date Referenced:** -

**Date Written:** *Jun 4,  
2009*

216 Well leaving in 10 hours for that 26.2 miles, and I can't find the my Body Glide... Not  
217 really I have it packed away.

218 So how'd my week go running wise got 2 3's in... one being tonight.

219 All those pains have surfaced, that haven't this whole training.

220 Mom has some health issues that has the potential to make her activity level drastically.  
221 My mom is really pretty active. She told us this last night which I ran shortly after that,  
222 and it made me appreciate the fact I can run very, very much. I have decided / ruled/ or  
223 whatever ..... slower, faster be damned..... I'm just going to run. Run until I can't  
224 anymore.. now that means more marathons cause that what keeps me motivated to run  
225 but that's that.

226 Running my 3 tonight I found a heads up penny which I'm going take all the luck that I  
227 can find. That penny is heading to South Bend with me for a "little" run. The Garmin is  
228 staying home. The pace function on that thing drove me insane all these weeks and I will  
229 not let it do that saturday. I'm going to wear a watch, I'm human... but I'll only look at it  
230 sometimes.

231 Well I'll let know how it all turns out.

232

## 26.2 Miles down and DONE!!!!!!!!!!

*Sub-chapter: 26.2 Miles down* *Date Referenced: -*  
*AND DONE!!!!!!!!!!*

*Date Written: Jun*  
*16, 2009*

233 SO..... How'd it go???

234 To sum up my whole experience, when I crossed the finished line I was planning the  
 235 training for my next Marathon.

236 I had a great marathon run!! I actually had fun. I chatted with a few runners along the  
 237 course as we played leap frog, I even missed them when they didn't catch me on our leap  
 238 frog game. The course was nice, that I'd probably think about doing it again. And it was  
 239 really nice not to know the course. My battle with the garmin that plague me all  
 240 training.... not an issue... kept to my word .... and left him home. I did wear a watch  
 241 which I didn't even look at till I hit mile twenty and stared at my time in  
 242 disbelief.....3:35..... shocked I was ..... then I went through whole cycle of how close I  
 243 could be to a PR..... I know I really wish my mind would not have gone there but it  
 244 did..... and I decided to try for it but the mile 22 -23 I just ran out of steam.... I thought i  
 245 was moving but I wasn't ... and the walks in the water stop got longer.... I was a little mad  
 246 at myself at first cause I was only an hour and 2 minutes from a PR at mile 20 and let the  
 247 wall beat me..... But then I thought did it, did it really??? no!!!! A PR was not my GOAL  
 248 .... My Goal was to have a nice marathon experience and finish in under 5 hours which I  
 249 did both. I wish I could describe how cool it was to turn the corner at mile 25 and in the  
 250 sky was the gold roof of the ND administration building. Then there was the long stretch  
 251 to the football stadium..... you reach it but it turns out that's the wrong end and you have  
 252 to keep running towards touch down Jesus... the turn into the stadium... the run down the  
 253 ramp all while the fight song it playing over the speakers..... It was COOL!!!

254 So it turns out old #7 was my second fastest marathon... next to My PR Chicago 2006 (  
 255 yes the Dena that haunted me during my training)..... So I'm walking not running away  
 256 from this one with a 4:49 marathon, a smile on my face, and a plan for Memphis cause  
 257 lets face it I only trained 10-12 weeks for this and my heart wasn't really in this one.....  
 258 what could I do with the Heart and the full 18 weeks???

259 Peace Out

260

261

262 Meb's Journal  
263

**maybe I need new socks...**

*Sub-chapter: Sure why not  
let's run another one*

*Date Referenced: -*

*Date Written: Apr  
29, 2009*

264 Thought my new shiny shoes would make a difference this morning. Alas they did  
265 not. With June 6th looming the inevitable doubts begin to creep in, ok not creep more like  
266 a constant , wailing, full throttle you are going to crash at high speed type thing. But why  
267 worry, it's only 26 miles right?  
268

*Sub-chapter: DATA!*

*Date Referenced: -*

*Date Written: May  
12, 2009*

269 Been a while so will start with speedwork this am. Joy of joys PRE made an appearance.  
270 He has been very busy as of late with his mall cop duties. But nice to have someone  
271 besides the old yet very fast Toolen to chase around. Tim who had this grand idea won't  
272 play.

273 Nice cool morning for 800 work

274 800 at 3:04

275 800 at 3:13

276 800 at 3:06

277 800 at 3:02

278 800 at 3:19

279 Next up... Thursday and the most exciting and fantastic 1 mile repeats YEAH!

280

281 A strange calm has descended upon me. What? One month out and no compulsive  
282 vomiting? No worries? Not sure how to take this as by now I am usually a mess. Maybe  
283 tis because this will be my last full before I become "old" ,wise and much more  
284 handsome at 37. Who knows?

285 Now where is Mimothy?

286

**What?**

**Sub-chapter:** *May 13-15th*    **Date Referenced:** -  
2009

**Date Written:** *May*  
*15, 2009*

287    Ahhh...Wednesday recovery runs....my favorites. Nice easy 5 miles. Then Thursday  
288    (14th) mile repeats, sadly the second one was a full minute faster than the first. Someone  
289    made a "pit stop then seemed to run faster...I hate him" Friday...ahhhh...recovery run.  
290    What seems to be the problem here? Am I actually looking forward to 20+ on Saturday?  
291    Seems a wire has come undone somewhere.

292

293 Tim:

294

295 Marathon blog.

296

297 Actually week leading up to Marathon blog.

298

299 Things seem to be progressing well. Actually too well. Strongest 20 milers I have had in  
300 the recent past and speedwork is...speedwork. The day arrives and we depart for  
301 Indiana. All goes according to plan until arrival when my "keys" decide to depart the  
302 area without permission. Massive spike in heart rate after GM kindly tells me they have  
303 no approved locksmith in the area and they would come pick up my vehicle tomorrow  
304 morning and I could pick it up Monday. 4 hours later and now with a headache I give  
305 some local locksmith access to the truck and have him take the door apart. Of course I  
306 have now come to the brilliant conclusion that someone actually stole my keys and will  
307 be coming back in the night to abscond with my truck. As I watch slick dismantle my  
308 door our dinner plans come and go...pizza then gets delivered. Cold pizza may not have  
309 been the best choice for a pre-marathon meal but it was handy and I could eat it and keep  
310 and my vehicle in sight to ensure the gangs that roam South Bend did not make a move  
311 on it. Little did I know that not only were my keys not stolen but they were resting  
312 peacefully on top of a certain someone's suitcase.

313

314 So...after 4.5 hours sleep it is time. Oddly enough at this point I still feel confident. SO  
315 confident that I decide to go out at a pace some 25 seconds a mile faster than I originally  
316 planned for. Water and Gatorade seemed a waste of time until mile 5. This was to be a  
317 monumental mistake. As temps started to rise I began to glisten a bit more. Still at 14  
318 things were just fine. By mile 16 the events of the previous evening, poor meal choice,  
319 lack of sleep and oh yes...no Gatorade early on came back to haunt me in the form of  
320 severe cramps. I was running 8:35ish prior to this but mile 17 was 10:00 flat. Mile 19...I  
321 stopped, literally stopped. I should say that my legs stopped, refused to go, calf muscles  
322 had other plans and apparently it involved providing me with brilliant searing pain. I  
323 have had cramps before but this time was different. Had there been a sharp instrument of  
324 any kind becoming a double amputee would have been a no brainer. Dena found me at  
325 this point and with a gleam in her eye and a spring in her step offered assistance. I may  
326 have growled at her...things were becoming a bit fuzzy due to the pain. For whatever  
327 reason she was gone...sorry Dena. So here we are 7 miles from the finish with joy of  
328 joys a few hills along the way. Sigh. Why? Why? Oh yes some moron had a great  
329 idea...TIM. For the record I forgive you but just barely. And so I shuffle on. I  
330 managed not to punch the guy in the grass skirt at the water stop. Not sure there would  
331 have been any point in it as I would have fallen over. So for every step I took heading  
332 away from downtown I now realize I have to take those same steps back. How is that for  
333 a pep talk to one's own self? Not good. Hmmm...what is this towel boys? The wet slap  
334 of the towel did offer a brief moment where I was not consumed with my mounting  
335 depression. To say that I had given up at this point would have been a gross  
336 understatement. I think you get the point here. That said, crossing the line yet again in  
337 bad shape continues to bring me some weird unexplainable element of joy (maybe

338 because it is over) and satisfaction. Might be nice to do one of these again where I  
339 actually don't vomit. Oh well, on to Memphis.

340

341

342

343

344

345



346 Pre's journal

347

*Sub-chapter: First Entry*

*Date Referenced: -*

*Date Written: Apr  
23, 2009*

348 I started my training about 6 weeks ago. it has been progressing as good as I could hope.  
349 I have come to realize the more I train for marathons (this will be my 6th) the more I  
350 don't do what i set out to do.

351 I always have high aspirations of hitting all my miles, running at least 5 but ideally 6 days  
352 a week. I never do that. I have often said that for me to run the marathon time I want  
353 (Sub 3:30) I have to up my mileage to some 60-65 mile weeks at peak mileage. The sad  
354 fact is, i don't have the time or will power to do that. With three kids, a full time job and  
355 college classes up until a month ago, I didn't always have the time to get in those miles I  
356 think are necessary. And come to think of it, the times where I have come close, i have  
357 run myself into injuries. There are way too many nights after work, baseball practice and  
358 cutting the grass that I just don't make it out for a run. and getting up at 5:30 is usually  
359 out of the question.

360 This training comes on the heels of one of my best marathons ever. I didn't have a PR in  
361 January at Disney but it was the best i have ever felt in the marathon and in training for a  
362 marathon.

363 One thing I think helped me in training for disney and I would like to carry over for this  
364 marathon is quality workouts and rest days. I am beginning to realize that I may not  
365 always make 5-6 days of running so i have to make sure on the days I do run, I get in a  
366 quality workout. It is easy to skip running days and if I can manage to skip the recovery  
367 runs and hit the long runs and speed work I think I can make this a succesful marathon.

368 I still have 2-3 long runs to go and I just started my speed work two weeks ago but i think  
369 I am getting stronger each week. I am fairly confident that i can reach my goal but only  
370 time will tell.

371 On a side note, I am experiementing with weight training for this marathon, but only  
372 slightly. i HAVE STARTED BY WORKING OUT ABOUT ONE TIME A WEEK  
373 WITH PLYOMETRICS AND LIGHT WEIGHTS IN MY BASEMENT. some core  
374 exercises, push ups and leg exercises with only body weight. I have learned quickly that  
375 running does not make my legs that strong.

376 More to come. Sorry this was so scattered.

377 Pre

378

*Sub-chapter:* 05-04-09

*Date Referenced:* -

*Date Written:* May 4,  
2009

379 This past week was a very good week as far as my training goes. Tuesday night, I was  
380 still a little sore but I went ahead and ran a speed work out. I did 6 800's and afterwards  
381 my right hamstring was very very tight. The good news is I was able to get them down  
382 around 3 minutes so that tells me my training is moving along well. I took wednesday  
383 and thursday off and came back Friday night with a light 4 mile run after work. It was  
384 labored but It didn't bother me much

385 I had to share the weekend running with Maura again this week. She needed to run a 5k  
386 so she chose the Law Day run in Belleville. I got up early and ran at 6 am with tim and  
387 Meb and toolen. It was a good 8 mile run. I was congested but I felt fine. I got home in  
388 time to eat breakfast, take a shower and go up to see the end of the Law Day race. It was  
389 weird to watch a local race and not be in it. I got over that pretty quick because I knew I  
390 would be running on Sunday.

391 On Sunday I ran with Toolen. I was supposed to do 20 miles so we decided to run 2  
392 miles, then race a 5k in St . Louis and then do 15 more after. Not a good Idea. The 5K  
393 was great. I ran the fastest in two years so i was very happy about that. The last 11 miles  
394 were pretty rough. My left hamstring was very very tight and I pretty much felt like  
395 crap. But the reward of running a fast 5k was welll worth the suffering I endured. I am  
396 happy that my speed is up to par. If I am going to run a fast marathon, I feel like I have  
397 to be able to run a fast 5k. I would say this Sunday was a confidence boost for my  
398 training.

399 One thing that was reinforced this weekend was the tole that long distance running takes  
400 on your body. 20 miles is nothing to take lightly. My body aches today. It is funny how  
401 fast your body can fall out of marathon shape. With any other sport, you can take a few  
402 months off and then come back rather quickly but long distance running is another beast.  
403 To think that 3 1/2 months ago, I ran 40 miles in 2 days and now my body wants to shut  
404 down after doing a 20 miler.

405 Well I have one more 20 miler to go and I hope that one is a little easier. I have  
406 tentatively planned that for two weeks from now. Maura and I are already jockeying for  
407 running time that weekend as we have several things planned with freinds and Maura has  
408 a 9 or 10 miler set for that week.

409 I am only going to do 2 twenty milers this training session. Normally i will do three but I  
410 think I can make it by with two. I think my training from january has given me a good  
411 enough base. But I guess we wil see in another month if I am right. THat's all for now

412



*Sub-chapter: Last 20*

*Date Referenced: May 16, 2009 - Date Written: May  
May 17, 2009 17, 2009*

438 My last 20 is done. I officially start my taper this week. That sounds very weird to say  
439 because I seem to recall tapering for an entire week last week. This training has been  
440 very sporadic and different from other marathons. In other marathons, it ran way more  
441 and the training lasted much longer. This marathon training has been shorter and I have  
442 cut down on my long runs to only 2 20's and an 18. Other marathons, iI have run at least  
443 3 20's and a 19.

444 As much as I want to PR, I don't really obsess about it. I have the attitude that if it  
445 happens it happens but if not, I won't be that worried. I actually would rather see Meb  
446 come in under four hours than have me come in under 3:30. I know he has been working  
447 very hard and I know he will never say it, but I think he is really trying to break 4 hours.  
448 Everyone but Meb himself knows he is capable of it.

449 Well my last twenty was with Toolen and Paula. We didn't run fast, we actually  
450 averaged 8:45's There was a few times I was very tired but I think that had to do with me  
451 not eating this morning. Once I got some gu and gatorade in me, i was ready to go. All  
452 in all, I came out of today's run with a positive outlook on this marathon. I had a  
453 relatively good run today and I feel confident about the next three weeks.

454 I am looking forward to having a weekend where I don't have to run more than 10 miles.  
455 I have a ton of things to do around the house and these 20 mile runs seem to take a lot of  
456 time. and getting up at 5:30 AM on a weekend is not very fun. But it is a pretty cool  
457 feeling to walk around all day knowing you have already run 20 miles that day and you  
458 can pretty much eat anything you want. I mean, most people won't run 20 miles in a  
459 month and I just did it in one day. It kind of gives me an eletist type of feeling or  
460 mentality. I like that feeling. I think that is one of the contributing factors of why I run  
461 marathons. Besides the social aspect and the exercise I get, I like the feeling that what I  
462 do is unique. Sure I hang out with other runners but at work and in my family, I am  
463 special. No one else runs as much or far as I do. I know I am not the best runner out here  
464 but what i do takes a great deal of dedication and determination and if I can devote  
465 myself to physically and mentally push myself to my limit on the race course, then  
466 anything else life throws at me is a peice of cake.

467 I also realize that anyone can run a marathon, you don't have to be a great athlete.  
468 Anyone can do this but only a select few actually choose to do it and follow through with  
469 it. I am one of those select few and since I am, I think it gives me a leg up on my co-  
470 workers because I know I have the drive and the determination to go all the way in  
471 anything I put my mind too. I like that feeling as well. Three weeks to go

472



*Sub-chapter: Last Week*

*Date Referenced: Jun 1, 2009 -  
Jun 5, 2009*

*Date Written: Jun 9,  
2009*

498 Here we are with only a few days left to go and I am cautiously optimistic. I know that  
499 no matter what I do now, it won't change anything so I just sit back and hope for the best.  
500 I am anxiously awaiting the weekend, partially because I am off work for two days but  
501 mostly because of the marathon. I know it will be a good time. Tuesday night was a  
502 light speed work with only 4 miles and 3 400's I am definitely not going to push it 5  
503 days before the marathon.

504

505 We packed up the car and left Illinois on Thursday morning with all three kids and  
506 Maura's Mom and Dad. We stopped at the Indiana Sand Dunes on the way and hung out  
507 for a while. When we finally reached South Bend, we went out for dinner, we opted for  
508 taste over carbs and we ate at Famous Meb's BBQ. It was excellent.

509

510 Friday morning came and more sightseeing ensued. The "expo" was at noon and even  
511 though they only had 10 vendors there, I was stilled very excited to get my bib number,  
512 shirt and chip. This is when I found out there were only 650 runners. This is much  
513 different than the 35,000 in Chicago. I don't think it will be so bad because I ran alone a  
514 lot in Disney for the marathon. That was sometimes a lonely marathon.

515

516 Tim and Dena and Toolen all came down later in the afternoon. We met them for dinner  
517 at Carabas. It was a very good time. This is one of the best parts of marathon week end.  
518 Now its off to bed and up early tomorrow for the inevitable.

519

520

*Sub-chapter: Race Day*

*Date Referenced: -*

*Date Written: Jun  
18, 2009*

521 Last night was interesting. I had about 6 nightmares about the marathon and all involved  
522 me running too slow and getting lost on the course. The morning came and I was ready  
523 to go. I took care of my business in the bathroom and ate two pop tarts and a bagel. I  
524 headed down to meet Dena, Tim, Jimmy, Meb and Paula. I was my usually hyper self,  
525 all geeked out about the impending peril I was going to put my body through. The  
526 weather outside was very nice and the forecast was favorable. Sixty degrees to start with  
527 a high in the mid seventies. Not much humidity. This was looking to be a great day.  
528

529 We made it to the starting line just in time and Jimmy and I hooked up at the starting line.  
530 Jimmy said he wanted to run a 3:40 and I made it no secret that I wanted to run under  
531 3:30. The gun sounded and we were off. Jimmy and I kind of unofficially told each  
532 other we were going to run together for a while. I figured that every mile Jimmy ran with  
533 me was a mile I didn't have to run by myself.  
534

535 We started out with some 7:45-7:55 splits. Things were going great and I felt good. I  
536 had a little issue with a possible blister on my left toe but that quickly was forgotten.  
537 Jimmy and I ran together for roughly 8-9 miles and the course was great. It wound  
538 through the neighborhoods and along the St. Joseph River. A few times during that  
539 stretch I would leave Jimmy for a ¼ mile or so but we would ultimately come back  
540 together.  
541

542 Around 9 miles, I broke away from Jimmy and ran on my own. I was still feeling very  
543 good and things were going great. I was consistently logging 7:35-7:50 miles and I  
544 didn't feel like stopping. I reached the halfway mark at 1:41:30 and I began to really  
545 believe that I could run under 3:30. I was getting very confident and I kept pushing on.  
546 My left hip started to ache but I took two Motrin and I was feeling better. By this point, I  
547 had seen Paula twice, Meb once and Dena once. They all looked good.  
548

549 As the race drew on, I broke it up in my head to different sections, I knew we had an out  
550 and back on the last half and I knew I would be heading back in at around 19-20 miles.  
551 At around 16 I still felt ok but I was getting a little bit more tired. The 7:45's were still  
552 coming but they weren't as easy. As we made the turn into the park at the far end of the  
553 course, the sun started to beat down and I was getting tired. The 7:45's turned into 8:00's  
554 and the 8:00's turned into 8:15, and then 8:30. By the time I hit mile 20, I was feeling it  
555 bad. I knew this was going to be a long 6 miles. It is definitely true that the first half of a  
556 marathon is 1-20 and the second half is 21-26.2.  
557

558 As we pulled out of the park and onto the streets, I was hurting and so was Meb. Meb  
559 didn't look very good but Dena did. Dena looked strong. It was getting harder and  
560 harder to maintain pace and by mile 22, I only needed to run 8:40's to break 3:30.  
561 Sounds simple right? I couldn't be more WRONG!!!!

562  
563 Maybe it was Disney that spoiled me but, I definitely forgot what it feels like at the end  
564 of a hard marathon. (I felt good at the end of Disney) With 4-5 miles left, all I wanted to  
565 do was quit. My legs were fried and I was starting to weaze a little. I couldn't wait for  
566 the next water stop and I looked forward to eating GU. I needed energy fast. My body  
567 was breaking down fast. There were two guys that I was hanging with for 4 or so miles  
568 and now they were slowly pulling away from me.

569  
570 As the race weathered on, my splits went into the 9's and then 10 minute mile range. I  
571 walked through water stops and even walked in the middle of a mile one time hoping my  
572 legs would feel better. I started to feel my left quad cramp and my left calf cramp. I was  
573 praying they wouldn't seize up. As these last few miles went on, I came to the realization  
574 that 3:30 was not in me today. I just didn't physically have it in me. Every time I tried to  
575 speed up, my legs would cramp and my breathing would get more labored. I only felt  
576 good when I stopped and walked. By this time, the sun was high and it was getting  
577 warmer but that wasn't the reason for my meltdown. The marathon got me, not the  
578 weather. The marathon is a sick demented beast and it chewed me up and was about  
579 ready to spit me to the curb.

580  
581 As I approached mile 25, I heard a familiar and unwanted voice, Jimmy Toolen came up  
582 behind me and gave me a word of encouragement. He said,"stay with me." He had done  
583 this in 2006 at Chicago and I was only able to run with him for 5 steps. I did better this  
584 time, I stayed with him for 50 meters and then I was done. I couldn't keep up with him.  
585 I say he was an unwanted voice because I really wish I could have beat him. I have never  
586 beaten Jimmy in a marathon. I have bettered him in 5k's and even a 10 miler but half and  
587 fulls, he has my number. And although we don't compete against each other, I would  
588 have considered it a great accomplishment to finish in front of him in a marathon. He is a  
589 machine.

590  
591 Well the last mile was very very very hard. I looked at my watch and I new I had to run  
592 better than a 10 ½ minute mile to get a PR. I'll be damned if I came this close to  
593 breaking 3:30 and didn't get a PR. I willed myself to running as fast as I could. I  
594 rounded the corner and saw the stadium. By this time we had met up with the half  
595 marathoners and the course was a little more crowded. Much to my dismay, we had to  
596 run all the way to the back of the stadium and in through the back tunnel. There were  
597 huge speakers blasting crowd noise and the Notre Dame fight song as I ran inside. I ran  
598 onto the field and looked up to the right where my in laws and kids were sitting. I waved  
599 and finished. I was finally done. They called my name on the loud speaker, "Pre  
600 Brueggeman has just finished a marathon." That felt awesome. I have finished 5 before  
601 but hearing the announcer single me out felt really cool.

602  
603 As I crossed the line, I staggered to the water tent and then to the food/popsicle tent. I  
604 felt horrible. I was not walking straight and I thought I might fall. As I walked through  
605 the crowd, I couldn't help but feel that strong sense of accomplishment come over me. It  
606 was like waves of emotion just kept pouring over me. It felt just like after my first  
607 marathon. I was overcome with emotion and I couldn't believe that I had done it. It



608 almost made me cry many times. I don't know how to describe it in words but it is a great  
609 feeling. One I have only felt after finishing a marathon. Maybe this is why I love it so  
610 much.

611

612 I know I didn't get the 3:30 but that didn't matter to me. I left everything I had on that  
613 course and I did the best I could. I had nothing left. My body on the other hand felt like  
614 it was hit with a mac truck. I made the comment more than once that morning that this  
615 was the hardest marathon I have ever done (really the hardest last 4 miles). I really think  
616 I forgot what it was like to feel completely horrible for the last 5 miles of a race. I  
617 haven't felt this way since Chicago 2006.

618

619 I met up with Jimmy and Paula and they both looked great. They felt good and were  
620 smiling. I wasn't. I hate them:) I continued to walk around the field in a daze and met  
621 up with Maura. She looked great and I found out she also had a PR. She ran a 2:23 for  
622 the half. She was very happy and so was I. It was turning out to be very good day for  
623 running.

624

625 Meb didn't turn out so well. He came in way later at 5:45 or so. That sucked but he  
626 showed a lot of determination in finishing. Meb may give up in his mind but he always  
627 finishes. There is a lot to be said about that.

628

629 P.S. The finishers medal could have been bigger

630

## 2 weeks after

*Sub-chapter: 2 weeks after*    *Date Referenced: -*

*Date Written: Jun  
18, 2009*

631 Here I am almost two weeks after the marathon. I have run exactly 1/4 mile since that  
632 day. I was schedlued to do 3 for a benefit run the Monday after but that was cancelled  
633 due to bad weather. For the past 8 days, I have been vacationing in Disneyworld. I took  
634 with me one pair running shorts and one running shirt but they never made it out of the  
635 suitcase. I figured I deserved a break for a week and besides, i would be walking many  
636 miles on the streets of Disney parks this week. My legs feel good and I am injury free.  
637 Always a plus after a marathon.

638 Since the race ended I have often thought about what I might have done differently  
639 during the race.

640 Did I go out too fast? Should I have stayed with Jimmy longer? Were my middle miles  
641 too far off pace? Did I rely too much on building a cusion and not enough about saving  
642 energy?

643 I thought long and hard and realized it was none of those. I think the only reason I fell  
644 apart is my training program. I didn't run enough long miles in training. I didn't put in  
645 the miles. It just wasn't there. I had a week off twords the end that didn't help but in the  
646 end I have no regrets. I ran one minute faster than i have ever run before and I did it with  
647 3/4 the training. This race taught me not what I am unable to do but rather what I am  
648 capable of. I am confident I can run a sub 3:30. I came damn close and I didn't  
649 train nearly as hard as I did for this past Disney Marathon.

650 Sure I had some sore feelings about coming close to my goal but I can't let myself think  
651 that way. I gave this race everything I had. I left everything out on the course. I couldn't  
652 have sprinted across the line if my life depended on it. And 3:33 is nothing to be sad  
653 about. I worked hard and I should be proud of that. I refuse to be a runner that bitches  
654 about running a time that many others would love to run. It is an unwritten rule that you  
655 are not allowed to complain about a PR. I don't intend on breaking that rule.

656 Marathons are amazing, They take you on an emotional roller coaster that, for me always  
657 ends on a high note. I love the way running marathons makes me feel. Even when you  
658 fell like crap at the end, you have that mental high and a new batch of stories to share  
659 when its all done.

660 Now I am done with vacation and I am ready to get back to running. My summer goal is  
661 to PR at 5K and fall will bring on another marathon. I intend to take one more shot at  
662 3:30 in Memphis In december.

663 See Ya Later

664

665 Jimmy's Journal  
666 18th of May-----easy 4 miles...for some crazy reason, now my knee has  
667 started to hurt.  
668 Not good..two weeks out from the marathon...going to run with a knee strap  
669 to see if that helps!  
670 Busy day at the store..so that up and down at the store didn't help the  
671 knee!  
672  
673 19th of May.....Didn't do speedwork in the morning..ran 3-800s at night  
674 with Pre..knee still  
675 hurting but not too bad that it would stop me from running!  
676  
677 20th Of May...another easy day of 5 miles....knee is still there but not as  
678 bad..really busy at store..so  
679 that means more up and down which isn't good for the knee!  
680  
681 21st of May....Ran with Meb in O'Fallon....easy but hard up the  
682 hills...went 5 miles...did a lot of work  
683 on the yard and worn my strap when I was cutting the grass...first time for  
684 that!!  
685  
686 22nd May.....Ran really early for 5 miles..drove to Charleston for girls  
687 state meet...which didn't help  
688 my knee.  
689  
690 23rd May...ran again in O'Fallon with Pre and Meb....good pace ..around 8  
691 minute miles...felt good!  
692  
693 24th May.....Good run with Pre on the metro link trail....stopped once  
694 for gu and water...good thing!  
695 Knee feels better when I don't try to push it!  
696  
697 25th of May....one more week of training and then a week of tampering..can't  
698 wait...if it wasn't for  
699 my knee, everything would be good...trying to drink more water and  
700 G2...hopefully that will keep  
701 me hydrated during the marathon....trying to drink less beers! Ran the  
702 Biathlon in Highland..not good..  
703 everything hurt....something about my back...couldn't run very well at  
704 all...everyone said that it  
705 looked like I was going to fall over..felt that way too...Meb caught up  
706 with me and ran about a mile  
707 with me and then took off once he saw Paula ahead...now another  
708 problem....don't know but it  
709 sure didn't feel good after 2 1/2 miles...one of my worse 5 mile race...  
710

711 26th May.....Ran easy 3 in subdivision..rain...Ran at night with  
712 Paula---8--400s..not too bad....  
713 a lot better than the previous day!! Maybe everything is okay!!!  
714 Total for the day was 9 miles  
715  
716 27th May.....ran 5 easy miles to Dierberg's and back home...hill was a  
717 little tough,,but feeling a  
718 lot better!  
719  
720 28th May....Ran easy 5 miles with Meb in O'Fallon...knee feels a lot better  
721 when I run with someone!  
722  
723 29th May....Ran a fast pace with Paula early..not too bad!  
724  
725 30th May.....Ran in O'Fallon with Meb and Tim and cut the course a little  
726 short...too much lighting!!!  
727  
728 31st May....Ran at Forest Park with Paula...hard pace but good..knee was  
729 okay!!! Did 10 miles  
730 which was okay...knee felt ok.  
731  
732 1st June.....easy 5 miles in morning with Paula..of course, it wasn't  
733 slow!!!  
734  
735 2nd June....Did speedwork in morning with Meb and Paula...Only 4-400s  
736 which was fine  
737 with me...total was a little over 4 miles...  
738  
739 3rd June....Ran on the Metro Link Trail for 6 miles with Paula..ran too  
740 hard..now knee hurts again!  
741 Not looking good for the marathon if the knee is hurting this much...will  
742 try to ice it and see if that helps!  
743  
744 4th June....Only ran 2 easy miles in the subdivision by myself..nice and  
745 easy...knee is still not  
746 feeling good!  
747  
748 5th June...Only ran 1 miles early in morning..now I don't need  
749 this...Paula is going up to South Bend  
750 later in the day..not good for her and not good for me trying to find a  
751 ride. Lucky for me..Tim said it  
752 was okay to go with them..felt stressed out because of Paula.and also for  
753 Tim's kids..had to bunch  
754 up in the back seat..not good..but none the less, a good trip up to South  
755 Bend...now, I'm really looking  
756 forward to the marathon..seeing the campus of Notre Dame..gets the blood

757 flowing a lot!!!  
758  
759 6th June...Marathon day..finally..but I think the training went by pretty  
760 fast..and only ran 2 --20 milers  
761  
762 hopefully it will be enough to get me thru the marathon....Only want to  
763 finish strong and on two feet!!!  
764 Want to feel good going into Notre Dame stadium....race went great...felt  
765 good the whole time...Ran with Pre for the first 9 miles or so..he took off  
766 and picked up the pace...which was fine with me!!! At around 18 or  
767 19 miles..felt really good and started to pass people..normally, that's too  
768 early to do that....could be bad  
769 for me later in the Race..but still felt good..tried to keep the pace at 8  
770 minute miles and be consistent....surprising..everything was working and  
771 couldn't wait to finish....Met up with the 1/2 marathon people or the 5K or  
772 10K people....felt a lot better than them..passed a ton of people...this was  
773 the last  
774 mile.....saw Pre around the 25 mile mark..I think...and couldn't believe I  
775 caught him..wasn't trying..  
776 didn't even think I was close to him..but saw him at the 19 mile mark and he  
777 looked like he was  
778 having a hard time!!!  
779 Going into the stadium was awesome...but had to slow down going thru the  
780 tunnel...afraid that I would  
781 fall and not be able to complete the marathon....but once on the field..it  
782 was great..knowing one that I was  
783 going to finish in reasonable shape, two that I was on the field of Notre  
784 Dame, and three that I was a little  
785 faster than I thought I would do...I wanted that time but didn't know if I  
786 could maintain a 8 minute pace.  
787 But I finished..my calves really tighten up and bad cramps.....but the knee  
788 was okay!!!!  
789  
790 7th June....really easy in morning...calves were in bad shape..total  
791 cramping...but a good feeling that  
792 the race went out okay!!!  
793  
794 8th June...another easy day of only 1 miles..calves still hurt..so better  
795 take it easy for another day.  
796  
797 9th of June--tornado last night in my subdivision..not good..lots of  
798 troubles for lots of people....  
799 Ran in subdivision with Paula,,for over 4 easy miles...  
800  
801 10th June----Ran to Railroad tracks and back home for an easy 4  
802 miles..Calves getting better!!

803

804 11th June--good day..ran with Paula for 5 miles..knees and calves doing a  
805 lot better!!

806

### Appendix D: Researcher Observations

1 Date: 25Apr09

2 Participants: Meb, Jimmy, Pre

3 Time in the Field: 6:35 a.m.

4 Time out of the field: 7:25 a.m.

5 Location: O'Fallon, IL

6 I arrived in the parking lot of St. Clare School at 6:35 a.m. and prepared to run with Meb,

7 Jimmy and Pre. They had started around 6 a.m. were meeting me at 6:45 a.m. for a

8 portion of their run. The three of them turned the corner on 3<sup>rd</sup> street and were laughing

9 and joking as they approached me. It was a cool April morning, but all three were

10 wearing singlets and appeared to be enjoying the early portion of their training run. They

11 greeted me as I joined them and they continued on with their run and conversation. The

12 conversation centered on a mutual running friend and his embarrassing moment in a race

13 this winter. The conversation turned quickly to the route the four of us would run over

14 the next hour. The group weighed the pros and cons of at least five routes and settled on

15 a five mile route that included at least two opportunities for water and restrooms. We

16 were passed by two police cars moving at an elevated rate of speed and the conversation

17 turned into speculation as to where they were going or what they were in such a rush for.

18 Since one of the runners is a detective, he found himself in the position of being asked a

19 series of police protocol questions and for potential destinations. The conversation

20 ranged from doughnut shops to a potential car accident, but the group tried to understand

21 what Pre was sharing about protocol and potentials while relating it to their individual

22 lives.



23 Meb was relating his experiences in driving through the accident prone area being  
24 discussed, while Jimmy simply tried to generate a healthy debate between the other two.  
25 As we entered the Nature Trail in O’Fallon, the topic of conversation quickly turned to  
26 Morels. Meb stated that he intended to hunt for Morels and that one of his lucky spots  
27 were along the trail. Jimmy simply asked for a couple while Pre was adamant that he’d  
28 never tasted a Morel, but would like to go with Meb sometime. Meb was clear that he  
29 hunted for Morels alone. The two joked for the next mile about the topic and Jimmy  
30 smiled and laughed as the two debated Morels and friendship.

31 We ran through Hesse Park and passed our first opportunity for water and restrooms.  
32 The group was still in deep debate about Morels and what true friends do and don’t do.  
33 We headed into the Sport Park and stopped for a quick drink. Another conversation  
34 started around the route the group they would finish their run with. Jimmy and I were  
35 going to run back to St. Clare and Pre and Meb were going to get a few more miles  
36 passes that. Everyone was sharing how they were feeling and the specific aches and  
37 pains they had. Jimmy was very clear that his knee was giving him a little trouble. He  
38 was wearing a running support on his right knee, as he has for the past year, but  
39 explained that the pain was increasing. Meb joke that he might consider taking a day off  
40 from running and Jimmy just laughed and reminded the group that he had not missed a  
41 day of running in over 14 years. The group was noticeably quiet for a few moments. I’m  
42 not sure if they were at a loss for words or were simply paying Jimmy a little respect.

43 The silence ended with Pre pointing out where he was 14 years ago and gave Jimmy a  
44 little trouble about his age. The group enjoyed the banter and headed back towards the  
45 school.

46 The pace of the run increased as we got closer back to the school--- Jimmy always  
47 stresses finishing strong. The conversation slowed as the pace increased, but there were  
48 still the occasional jabs about Morels, friends, cops and Jimmy's age. We returned to the  
49 school around 7:25 a.m. Everyone got a drink and then parted ways. I ran roughly 5  
50 miles with the group for the day.  
51

52 Date: 02May09

53 Participants: Meb, Jimmy, Pre

54 Time in the Field: 6:00 a.m.

55 Time out of the field: 6:50 a.m.

56 Location: O'Fallon, IL

57 I pulled into the parking lot of the Y.M.C.A. in O'Fallon a little before 6:00 a.m. and was  
58 greeted by Pre and Jimmy. Pre arrived a few minutes later. It was a brisk morning with  
59 overcast skies. After a brief conversation of how early it was and how crazy runners are  
60 in general. The group started running south towards Rock Springs Park. The  
61 conversation of making sure a restroom was available early in the run was prominent  
62 within the group. Pre described his Friday evening activities and the quantity of  
63 Margaritas that he consumed. After that, Pre was relatively quiet for the remainder of the  
64 run. Jimmy and Meb each took turns describing how this was out of character for Pre.  
65 They were each a bit concerned that Pre's behavior was something more than a hangover.  
66 Jimmy and Meb were discussing the challenges within the real estate market. They  
67 discussed the pros and cons of different features of homes and time of year as it relates to  
68 selling homes. Meb was trying to describe how busy he was and why he would not be  
69 running with the group on Sunday at the Race for Sight in St. Louis. The pace increased  
70 to nearly a sprint as we approached the restrooms. The restroom at Rock Springs Park  
71 only accommodates one person at a time. Pre still didn't have a lot to say.  
72 The conversation of Morels and good places to find them heated up again and Pre joined  
73 in, but not to the level I observed on a previous run. The group was laboring a little more

74 than in the previous run. Breathing was heavier, conversation was less, but the overall  
75 pace was pretty consistent.

76 The group planned on meeting at the track at the Shiloh Middle School on Tuesday  
77 morning at 5:30 for a speed workout. We ran through the city Park and returned to the  
78 Y.M.C.A. Jimmy, Pre and Meb were going to run a few more miles and I was going to  
79 meet Dena for some of her run in Collinsville. I ran roughly 4 miles with the group.

80

81 Date: 02May09

82 Participants: Dena

83 Time in the Field: 7:45 a.m.

84 Time out of the field: 8:45 a.m.

85 Location: Collinsville, IL

86 I arrived in the parking lot of the Madison County Parks building around 7:40 a.m. and  
87 changed shirts from my previous run. I saw Dena approaching the trail-head. She looked  
88 to be running well. Her head was high, her hands relaxed and she didn't appear to be  
89 laboring through the run. She greeted me with a smile and a request for Gatorade. I had  
90 brought a drink to the trail-head for her. She was quick to say how nice the weather was  
91 and how she appreciated that the sun spent most of the time tucked behind the clouds.  
92 She joked about her experience with the sun during the Chicago Marathon in 2007. This  
93 was the race called off roughly 4 hours into it due to the extreme heat and unsafe  
94 conditions.

95 After a quick drink we head back onto the Madison County Trail for the final 4 miles of  
96 her run. She was explaining how her pace was quicker than she expected and she felt  
97 pretty good. She stated that she zoned out for a chunk of the run and was simply thinking  
98 about things at work, her family and friends. We crossed over a major intersection and  
99 entered a wooded section of the trail. Dena asked how Jimmy, Meb and Pre were and if  
100 they were running the race on Sunday.

101 Dena was explaining how difficult it was to describe the feelings, emotions and  
102 satisfaction she gets from running to people who don't run. She went on to describe how  
103 she has time to herself and to simply think about things. She was smiling while she

104 shared that sometimes, things along a run simply spark a thought or present a clear  
105 answer to something that she had not been able to resolve. She went on to explain that  
106 one of the biggest things she learned while running is that sometimes you can't explain  
107 why things happen. She placed this into the context of running by comparing her  
108 previous marathons. She used the same training schedule and prepared very similarly for  
109 the races, but the outcomes varied. She rationalized the results with external factors like  
110 weather, but at the end of her thought she stated that when things are going well---- just  
111 enjoy them. The pace of our run increased slightly during this conversation and as we  
112 approached the 2-mile mark and some water.

113 We grabbed a quick drink and discussed the Race for Sight on Sunday. Dena stated how  
114 nice it would be to see people who she hadn't spent much time with due to a very hectic  
115 work schedule. One of the couples from the running group has a nephew that benefits  
116 from the group the race was benefitting and Dena was anticipating seeing many members  
117 of the group at the race in support of this great cause and of their friends.

118 As we approached the trail-head and the end of our run, Dena thanked me for meeting her  
119 to run and explained how nice it was to have someone to share a run with every now and  
120 again. She stressed she enjoyed the "alone time" but sometimes appreciated the  
121 company. She also was very clear that the company she appreciated didn't change her  
122 pace or dominate the run. We finished in a very controlled and steady manner and  
123 enjoyed the remainder of the Gatorade we started 4 miles previously.

124

125 Date: 03May09

126 Participants: Dena, Jimmy, Pre

127 Time in the Field: 7:15 a.m.

128 Time out of the field: 9:25 a.m.

129 Location: St. Louis, MO (Union Station)

130

131 I entered the Parking lot at Union Station at 7:15 a.m., parked and went to register for the  
132 race. After pinning my bib number onto my shirt I went to look for Dena, Jimmy and  
133 Pre. I ran into Dena and she informed me that Jimmy and Pre were getting some miles in  
134 prior to the race so that they did not have to run as many after. They did not run their  
135 long run on Saturday as Dena had done. Dena and I proceeded to move towards the start  
136 of the race and found 8 members of the running group, including the couple they came  
137 out to support with their nephew.

138 The group was cheerful and spent time catching up on each other's lives. The  
139 discussions ranged from vacations, work and family to the good and bad of their current  
140 running state. The young man the group was running for was walking around the circle  
141 of friends and greeting many of them. He was openly greeted and given the full attention  
142 of the member of the group that he was interacting with. Any conversation was paused  
143 and no one seemed worried about being rude or what the others would think. They  
144 simply stopped and picked the young man up and embraced him. As I watched more  
145 people enter the circle of friends, including Jimmy and Pre, the same welcome was  
146 extended to each of them. They did not pick these folks up, but they did hug or provide a  
147 high five to each person.

148 As the start time got closer the conversation did switch to who was “racing or running”  
149 and who was going to run with who or simply run alone. Jimmy and Pre decided that  
150 that would start the race together and Dena and I decided to start with another member of  
151 the group. He was very quick to say that he was only starting with us and that he was  
152 going to keep a nice and steady pace as he worked through some leg pain.

153 The crowd paused as the National Anthem was played ahead of the start of the 5k race.  
154 The anthem concluded the race started and the runners were off. Dena spent the first  
155 mile dodging strollers, walkers and some of the slower runners. We started the race  
156 towards the back of the pack. I saw Jimmy and Pre as we rounded the first corner. They  
157 were out towards the front of the pack. Dena was running hard and we did not have  
158 much conversation at that point. Her breathing was heavy and she appeared to be  
159 focused on the task at hand. I saw Pre as we concluded the first small loop of the race  
160 and he was also running hard. He had a look of determination on his face as he  
161 disappeared into the net section of the course. Jimmy had fallen behind Pre and appeared  
162 to be more relaxed. She was running at an elevated level, but seemed much more at ease  
163 with the pace of his race.

164 Dena looked down at her watch and was surprised at her pace. She put her head down  
165 and continued the race. She started to slow a bit towards the end of the run and I asked if  
166 everything was alright. She began to explain that she hadn’t planned on running this hard  
167 or fast. I simply asked why stop now and she growled and picked up the pace once again.  
168 She finished the race just shy of a personal record. She was excited about the results of  
169 the race, especially since it was the day after a long run. We grabbed a quick drink of  
170 water and went back onto the course to run a mile cool down. Jimmy and Pre had



171 already finished and were out running some more and intended to return for the awards  
172 ceremony.

173 The group that was talking prior to the race reassembled and watched the kids fun run.

174 The group cheered on the young runners who varied in age from 1 to 12 years of age.

175 Each of the runners smiled, laughed and watched these young athletes. The conversation

176 after the kids race included how much fun it is to watch the race and the memories it

177 brought. There was also a portion of the conversation of how the kids running the race

178 and the children for whom the race was benefitting were similar. The group focused on

179 the similarities as opposed to the differences. This conversation was representative to

180 how the group acted prior to the race.

181 Jimmy and Pre returned to receive their age group awards and then proceeded back to the

182 streets of St. Louis to complete their run. Dena rejoined the group in conversation and I

183 headed home. I saw Jimmy and Pre running by the train station. Pre was at least 25

184 yards ahead of Jimmy and the two looked to be laboring on the tail end of their run.

185

186

187 Date: 05May09

188 Participants: Jimmy, Meb

189 Time in the Field: 6:00 a.m.

190 Time out of the field: 6:30 a.m.

191 Location: Shiloh, IL (Shiloh Middle School)

192 I pulled into the dark parking lot at Shiloh Middle School a little before 6:30. Meb was  
193 already in the lot and Jimmy was pulling in as I turned my car engine off. It was a brisk  
194 morning and Jimmy and Meb had planned to run 800 m intervals. We all got out of our  
195 cars and greeted each other. Meb informed us that Pre was not going to be joining us  
196 today because of work. He had called him the night before. The three of us jogged  
197 through the parking lot and out to the road for a 1.5 mile warm up.

198 It was quite cool out and there was a light breeze blowing. Jimmy was telling Meb about  
199 the Run for Sight race on Sunday and the remainder of the run that day with Pre. He was  
200 quick to list all of the runners who participated in the race and filled Meb in on some of  
201 the new happenings in the personal lives of some of the other runners. He then  
202 proceeded to describe how Pre was pulling him in the later parts of their run. Jimmy said  
203 he tried everything to get Pre to slow down, but nothing worked. He tried calling by the  
204 names of other runners who have a habit of running in front of the group. He also just  
205 flat out told him to slow up. Jimmy stated that Pre appeared to be in a different place.  
206 He said it looked like he thought he was still racing. The conversation quickly turned  
207 from that run to what the two of them would run today. They debated between the  
208 number of 800 m intervals and the pace.

209 We turned around at the .75 mile mark by the golf course and we startled by an oncoming  
210 car. This prompted some jokes about runners who don't follow the unwritten rules of  
211 running. This includes running against traffic, and fashion challenges like short shorts  
212 and the challenges of wearing white shorts. We jogged back into the parking lot and Meb  
213 grabbed his Garmin from his truck and we walked down to the track. The track sits at the  
214 bottom of a hill next to the baseball and softball fields.

215 Jimmy and Meb walked to the start line and began to run their first 800 m interval. They  
216 started shoulder to shoulder with Meb on the inside lane. They ran stride for stride for  
217 the first lap, 400 m, of the interval. They were both running with their heads upright,  
218 with relaxed hands and their arm motion was not crossing their bodies. Meb pulled  
219 slightly ahead of Jimmy on the second lap and Jimmy finished the interval in the inside  
220 lane behind Meb. Meb looked at his Garmin for the split and seemed surprised. Jimmy  
221 called out what he thought the split was and Meb verified that Jimmy was roughly right.  
222 They discussed how the pace was a little fast for their first interval, and then Meb was  
223 rationalizing why and how that came about. He mentioned the brisk temperature and  
224 light breeze, when Jimmy interrupted him and said that is always how it is for Meb.  
225 They began to set a target pace for the second interval and agreed to make an adjustment  
226 of their pace after looking at their 400 m split. They slowed down a bit as they  
227 completed their recovery lap and proceeded to run their second interval.

228 I watched this interval from the parking lot and the only true difference is that Meb  
229 allowed Jimmy to set the pace. I waved at the two and left the field.

230

231

232 Date: 09May09

233 Participants: Meb, Jimmy

234 Time in the Field: 6:45 a.m.

235 Time out of the field: 7:30 a.m.

236 Location: O'Fallon, IL (St. Clare School)

237 I pulled into the parking lot of St. Clare School at 6:40 and prepared to run with Meb and

238 Jimmy. They had started at 6 and I was planning to run the last 4 or 5 miles of their run

239 with them. I heard the two of them laughing as they turned the corner by the school.

240 They looked to be running at a very relaxed pace and appeared to be enjoying each

241 other's company. Meb immediately stated that Jimmy was trying to kill him early in the

242 run. Meb said that they were keeping a nice controlled pace for the first 4 miles. He said

243 they stopped at the Sport's Park for a drink and to use the restroom, and then there was a

244 different Jimmy after the stop. He said Jimmy increased the pace by nearly a minute per

245 mile. Meb said he kept asking him what he was doing and Jimmy was simply grinning

246 and pressing the pace. Meb said Jimmy is not allowed to use the restroom during runs

247 anymore if he does that every time.

248 We entered the gym to get a drink before we completed their run. Neither Meb nor

249 Jimmy had been in the gym since they put the new floor in and they discussed how the

250 gym used to look and how nice it is in its current state. They both got drinks of water

251 from the fountain and began to plan the route for the final portion of their run. Meb

252 quickly suggested a route to the north and Jimmy pointed out the hills they would have to

253 run on that route. Meb stated that the hills would be a good punishment for Jimmy after

254 pushing the pace earlier in the run. They laughed and agreed on a route that went east  
255 and would run us through the park.

256 They mentioned that Pre was working long hours on a major case in Columbia and that  
257 they hadn't talked with him in a couple of days. There was a distinct pause in the  
258 conversation. Jimmy broke the silence and was discussing a couple of customers that  
259 came into his store. He described a young woman with her two kids trying on what  
260 seemed to be a hundred pairs of shoes. The young lady would try on shoe after shoe  
261 while her kids ran through the store knocking things off of the racks. Meb asked what  
262 shoes she bought and Jimmy laughed and said none of them. This prompted Meb to  
263 describe a similar situation with showing a family a series of houses to buy. The two of  
264 them were assuring the other they knew how that was and that they've seen that before.  
265 It was interesting to see how two different lives were being compared and contrasted  
266 through the run.

267 Meb joked with Jimmy about picking up the pace for the last .25 miles of the run and  
268 they laughed as we approached the school parking lot. The two made plans to run  
269 Tuesday morning and agreed that Meb would inform Pre of the run. We parted ways and  
270 I left the field.

271

272

273 Date: 12May09

274 Participants: Jimmy, Meb and Pre

275 Time in the Field: 6:00 a.m.

276 Time out of the field: 6:25a.m.

277 Location: Shiloh, IL (Shiloh Middle School)

278 I entered a dark and empty parking lot a little before 6 a.m. and looked forward to a good  
279 morning run. It was extremely foggy and this was going to add an interesting element to  
280 the interval workout ahead. Meb, Jimmy and Meb all pulled into the lot like they were in  
281 a parade and the group prepared to run. Jimmy and Meb were tying their shoes and Pre  
282 was making sure that his unmarked squad car was locked. The group was not real  
283 talkative at first and was eager to begin the run.

284 As we headed out of the parking lot and towards the golf course, Jimmy and Meb joked  
285 that it was nice of Pre to join them since they hadn't seen him in a while. Pre explained  
286 that he was working the triple murder case in Columbia where a young mother and two  
287 kids were strangled. He seemed very uneasy as he described the long hours and some of  
288 his task. He stated that he couldn't share the details of the investigation or the evidence,  
289 and the group didn't press him any further. He described how reviewing the crime scene  
290 evidence made him feel awful. He was quick to point out that he's been around several  
291 dead bodies, but it was the kids that he couldn't understand. He said he just couldn't  
292 understand why or how someone could do something like that. Meb and Jimmy both  
293 provided their theories on who committed the crime and Pre would neither confirm nor  
294 deny their theories.

295 The fog and low visibility along with the conversation would have made for a great scene  
296 from a horror movie. The subject changed to the task at hand for the interval workout as  
297 we got closer to the track. Meb told Pre not to let Jimmy use the restroom or they would  
298 have to run way too fast. This was an effort to fill Pre in on the weekend run. The group  
299 walked down to the track and I exited the field.  
300

301 Date: 02May09

302 Participants: Meb

303 Time in the Field: 6:45 a.m.

304 Time out of the field: 7:30 a.m.

305 Location: O'Fallon, IL (Y.M.C.A)

306 I pulled into the parking lot at the Y.M.C.A. at 6:35 a.m. and prepared to run with Meb.

307 He was running 20 miles and I had planned to run some of his middle miles with him.

308 Meb was ready to run as soon as I got out of my car and I locked my car and we started  
309 running.

310 We went south on Seven Hills Road and were heading towards Rock Springs Park. It  
311 was a nice morning with clear skies and temperatures in the mid 50s. Meb and I ran a  
312 nice easy pace and we chatted about life in general. We passed a man walking a Bulldog  
313 in the park. Meb pointed out how the man resembled his dog, and that how he sees that  
314 quite a bit. We continued at a controlled pace into the O'Fallon Park and stopped for a  
315 drink of water. The park was empty and had a peaceful calm about it.

316 Our conversation turned to how Meb's training was coming along. He was stressing how  
317 good he has felt during his runs, and especially his long runs. He referenced our current  
318 run as an example. He said he felt great. He had limited pain and was actually enjoying  
319 the training for this race. He laughed and said that he hoped that he hadn't jinxed  
320 himself. He then talked about how long it took him to start really running again after the  
321 Chicago 2007 Marathon. He said that race took the fun out of running. He grinned and  
322 said he was glad to be back and that he hopes to never have weather like that again for a  
323 race.



324 We turned back onto Seven Hills Road towards the Y.M.C.A. and Meb headed north as I  
325 stopped at my car and left the field.

326

327 Date: 23May09

328 Participants: Jimmy, Meb

329 Time in the Field: 6:30 a.m.

330 Time out of the field: 7:30 a.m.

331 Location: O'Fallon, IL (Hesse Park)

332 I entered the parking lot at 6:15 a.m. and prepared to run with Jimmy and Meb. They had  
333 started at 6 a.m. from the Y.M.C.A. and I was going to run the last 5 to 6 miles of their  
334 run with them. The humidity level was extremely high and the clouds looked like they  
335 were getting ready to unload a ton of rain on us. Jimmy and Meb ran off of the nature  
336 trail and got a quick drink of water.

337 We headed done the remainder of the nature trail and all gave our assessments of the  
338 clouds and the impending weather. We plotted a course back to the Y.M.C.A. and a  
339 couple alternate routes in case the weather turned on us quickly. Jimmy and Meb were  
340 discussing the hotel arrangement s for the marathon and the travel plans for each of them.  
341 The discussed the pros and cons of arriving to South Bend early and also for arriving  
342 later. They differed in their opinions, but agreed they were excited to be nearing the race.  
343 We could see lightening in the distance and the storm appeared to be moving towards us  
344 at a more rapid rate. We immediately turned north and prepared for the hills along the  
345 route back to the Y.M.C.A. We picked up the pace and joked that we need Pre to be with  
346 us. He is the tallest of the group and Meb commented that he would potentially make a  
347 great lightning rod. The storm seemed like it was chasing us and the lightening looked  
348 like it was reaching the ground. We began to pick up the pace as the rain began to fall  
349 and we could feel the thunder rumble in our feet. The only conversation was that of the

350 explicative shouted at every lightning strike. The group reached the Y.M.C.A. and  
351 Jimmy headed home. Meb was driving me to my car at Hesse Park and we watched the  
352 storm move past us. The lightning and thunder was gone, but the rain was steady.  
353 Meb stated that he still needed 2.3 miles to complete his run for the day and that he really  
354 wanted to finish it before going home. We were already soaked and the lightning was  
355 gone, so we decided to run up and down the nature trail lined with trees to complete the  
356 run. We figured that the trees would provide some shelter form the rain. We discussed  
357 how meaningless the 2.3 miles were to the physical training for the marathon, but how  
358 critical they were for the mental training. Meb said we wouldn't walk off a marathon  
359 course at mile 23.9, and that's why we needed to finish the run. We both enjoyed a laugh  
360 and proceeded to run through the down pour.

361 As we finished the final steps of the run, the rain stopped and the sun began to peek  
362 through the trees. Meb joked that the running gods were testing us today, and that he was  
363 extremely glad that we didn't stop short of his goal today. He was excited about the  
364 upcoming race in South Bend and felt good about his training. He was a little worried  
365 that Jimmy or Pre was going to want to run with him. He wanted to run his pace and his  
366 race. He said he was going to make sure that they understood where he stood on that  
367 issue. We each put dry shirts on and left the park.

368

369 Date: 24May09

370 Participants: Dena, Jimmy, Pre

371 Time in the Field: 6:45 a.m.

372 Time out of the field: 7:45 a.m.

373 Location: Belleville, IL (Shield Street Metro Station)

374 I parked in the Shield Station Metro Link lot at 6:45 a.m. and Dena was waiting for me.

375 We got out of the car and prepared to run. Dena sated that she was tired and was looking

376 forward to completing the run and getting back to her couch. As we got ready to start,

377 Jimmy and Pre pulled into the lot. Dena was trying to figure out why they were there

378 because they were supposed to be running in Forrest Park. Dena immediately laid down

379 the ground rules for not “racing” during the run. Jimmy and Pre joked with Dena and the

380 four of us headed south on the Metro Trail towards East-end Kourhey Park.

381 Jimmy and Pre pulled away from us very quickly and Dena sighed in relief. She then

382 proceeded to poke fun at them for wearing the exact same shirt. Dena said she was going

383 to run 5 to 6 miles. We discussed where the 2.5 mile and 3 mile turnarounds were on the

384 trail and settled into a comfortable pace. Dena was talking about being both excited and

385 nervous about the upcoming race. She couldn’t wait to get to Notre Dame, but was

386 concerned about the shortened training schedule she ran.

387 She discussed the many missed opportunities for a run and rationalized the choices she

388 made that kept her from her runs. These choices ranged from spending time with her

389 nephews, helping her mother, work challenges and simply relaxing. She acknowledged

390 that some of these choices were good while others not so good.

391 The conversation moved to the travel and lodging for the marathon and for the meal the  
392 night before the race. She said that Pre had made dinner reservations for the group and  
393 an Italian restaurant. She said that was one less thing she had to worry about. She then  
394 started listing the things she needed to get ready. Body Glide, GU, Motrin and beer were  
395 just a few. Just about that time, Jimmy and Pre were on their way back past us. They  
396 smiled and high-fived us and proceeded their conversation and elevated pace.  
397 They looked like they were floating. They ran relaxed and looked to be simply enjoying  
398 the moment. Pre looked back and told Dena “Notre Dame here we come!” Dena stated  
399 how well he was running and how she hoped that he ran well. She then asked how Meb  
400 was running. She was really hoping that this was the race that he broke that magical 4  
401 hour barrier. She stated that a runner with his legs and her head would be extremely fast.  
402 We passed a small group sitting in Optimist Park and we exchanged pleasantries about  
403 the weather and then Dena focused the conversation on her desire to get back to her  
404 couch. She was running a little tense. Her fists were tight and just didn’t seem like she  
405 was comfortable. When I asked, she simply stated that she was tired and ready to rest,  
406 and is happy to be tapering for the race.  
407 Jimmy and Pre were waiting for us in the parking lot and we discussed the travel plans  
408 and lodging for the race. Everyone was excited to get to the race and about seeing the  
409 stadium.  
410 We parted ways and I exited the field.  
411

412 Date: 31May09

413 Participants: Dena

414 Time in the Field: 7:00 a.m.

415 Time out of the field: 7:45 a.m.

416 Location: Belleville, IL (Shield Street Metro Link Station)

417 I parked at the Shield Street Metro Station a little before 7 a.m. Dena was waiting and we

418 walked towards the Metro Trail. Dena was very clear that she was in for a flat run. We

419 went towards the college at a nice and easy pace.

420 The conversation was more about work than anything else. We shared stories of the

421 good, bad and ugly of our jobs and came to the conclusion that the lottery would be the

422 way to go. Dena looked to be much more relaxed than the week prior. Her hands were

423 open and her breathing at a level where conversation was pretty easy.

424 We completed our run and I exited the field.

425

426 Date: 05Jun09

427 Participants: Dena, Jimmy, Pre, Meb

428 Time in the Field: 4:30 p.m.

429 Time out of the field: 7:30 p.m.

430 Location: South Bend, IN (Carrabba's Italian Grill, Notre Dame Book Store and Hotel)

431 Dena, Jimmy and Pre met Pre's family and me at Carrabba's Italian Grill for dinner. Pre

432 and Dena were careful about what they ordered. They wanted to make sure that their

433 dinner didn't present any problems on race day. Jimmy was going to order food to take

434 back to the hotel for later and eat with another member of the group not participating in

435 the study. Jimmy, Pre and Dena all ordered a beer and toasted the race and their success

436 in it. The conversation at dinner included planning on how to get to the start and how Pre

437 and his wife were going to get there for the 2 different start times for the full and half

438 marathon. The conversation also included some of the challenges Meb encountered at

439 the hotel which included losing the keys to his car.

440 The group had a leisurely dinner and went to the Notre Dame Book Store. Jimmy, Dena

441 and Pre all found souvenirs and each bought a Notre Dame Cross Country T-shirt.

442 Jimmy also bought some Notre Dame gear for his granddaughter. Jimmy appeared to

443 enjoy looking at all of the souvenirs and he walked through the history of many of the

444 items. He continually stated how much he looked forward to running into the stadium.

445 The group headed back to the hotel and found a very frantic Meb in the parking lot. Meb

446 was sitting on the curb as a locksmith was taking his door apart. Meb told the group that

447 he had lost the keys to his car somewhere between the car and his room. He told us that

448 he had searched the parking lot, the hallways, his room, the car and everywhere else he

449 could think of. He checked at the front desk and double checked the path from his car to  
450 the room. He called GM to try and get assistance, but no one could get him what he was  
451 looking for in the timeframe that he needed. He was afraid that someone had stolen his  
452 keys and was going to break into the car later in the evening. He appeared frustrated,  
453 exhausted and extremely distracted. The group offered to get him dinner, but he and his  
454 wife had already ordered pizza. We sat with Meb for awhile while the locksmith worked  
455 on his car and how proficient the man was. Meb told us how reasonable and friendly the  
456 locksmith was and how he quickly responded to his needs.

457 Meb then went on to describe how his wife hadn't even stepped one foot into the race  
458 expo when she decided to sign up for and run the half marathon. He said she didn't even  
459 pack running clothes so she had to buy some from the vendors at the expo. He said she  
460 really hadn't trained, but would probably go out and run a personal best. He also stated  
461 that he was worried about the fact that she hadn't run in the clothes she just bought prior  
462 to going out and running 13.1 miles. He finished up with the locksmith and said he  
463 needed to go and relax.

464 After a while the group each went back to their rooms to prepare for the race. Dena laid  
465 her clothes out for the race and began to write on her shoes. She was writing the names  
466 of people on her shoes. She told me that she did this as a way to pay tribute to special  
467 people in her life that have died. She wrote her father's name, her adopted grandfather's  
468 name and the name of a recently deceased father of a friend. She said that this gave her  
469 strength and purpose while on the course. It was a way for her to connect with the  
470 important people in her life and remind her of those special people no longer with her.



471 She smiled and pinned her bib to her shirt, got her hat out and began to lay out her  
472 breakfast.

473 I went down to the pool where Pre and his wife were watching their children swim and  
474 were working out the details of the morning of the race. They were also speaking with a  
475 couple of other people running the race. One of them had run 170 marathons to date, and  
476 Notre Dame was going to be number 171. Pre and I chatted with him and asked question  
477 after question trying to gain insight to what it takes to run 170 marathons and about his  
478 experiences. The gentleman entertained all of our questions and was very generous with  
479 his time, experiences and insights.

480 Pre wanted to know his average finish time. He quickly responded with a sound 4:30.

481 He said for him, time was not real important. It was more about completing the race and  
482 experiences the unique nature of each course and destination. He then stated that he had  
483 never run the same marathon twice and that he hadn't started running until he turned 50.  
484 He is now 73. Pre and I looked on in amazement. Pre and his family went back to his  
485 room to prepare for the morning and I continued my conversation with this very  
486 interesting marathon runner.

487 I asked how the group started the conversation, and he pointed out that he noticed another  
488 runner trying to balance out getting to the start line and taking care his family. The 170  
489 marathon man recognized this and offered to give the man a lift to the start line. Pre  
490 watched this and joined the conversation.

491 I asked him what the hardest race he had completed was. His answer was amazing. He  
492 said the hottest race was the Badlands 100 mile race. He melted three pairs of shoes  
493 along the course. Kilimanjaro was the toughest race due to elevation. The run across the

494 Sahara was the hardest psychological. This was because you felt like you were all by  
495 yourself. All he had was a map that was in French, a compass, signal flares and a snake  
496 bite kit. He said you were looking at sand dunes that you knew were not on the map and  
497 probably would be different the next morning. He said that the terrain in Antarctica was  
498 the most physically challenging. I sat in amazement of the experiences this man had  
499 through his running.

500 I asked him with all his experiences, why run another race. He simply stated that each  
501 race is unique, with different goals and different experiences and this is what brings him  
502 to each race. I thanked him for his time and returned to my room for the evening

503

504

505 Date: 06Jun09

506 Participants: Dena, Jimmy, Pre, Meb

507 Time in the Field: 5:00 a.m.

508 Time out of the field: 11:30 p.m.

509 Location: South Bend, IN (Hotel, Start-line, Course, Notre Dame Stadium)

510 The group started assembling in the lobby around 5 am and Pre was already bouncing off  
511 of the wall. He was trying to describe his nightmares from the night before to anyone  
512 who would listen. He explained that he dreamt that the course was full of team building  
513 activities and he couldn't complete them, and he was not going to make his time. Then  
514 he realized that he didn't have any nip guards and then remembered to take his Imodium.  
515 He went back to his room to take the Imodium and look for nip guards.

516 Dena was sitting on the couch in the hotel lobby very quietly and seemed to be mentally  
517 preparing for the race. She was watching the clock and seemed to be a little uneasy that  
518 no one had seen Jimmy as of yet.

519 Meb was discussing his lack of sleep as a result of losing his keys and worrying about his  
520 car being stolen. He was also concerned with his wife waiting until later to go to the  
521 start-line for the half marathon. He was worried that she would fall back asleep and miss  
522 the race. He coordinated a ride for his wife with Pre's wife to ensure she wouldn't miss  
523 the race.

524 Jimmy came off of the elevator and was visibly excited about the race. He had his race  
525 bag that included the football he wanted to get pictures with on the field after the race.  
526 He was offering the group bagels and asking everyone about their throw away clothes  
527 and preparation for the race.

528 Everyone moved to the parking lot and I drove them to the start line. The conversation in  
529 the car was relatively limited and it was only a five minute drive to the starting area. We  
530 parked roughly 4 blocks from the start line and walked as a group towards the start of the  
531 race. The group discussed the good weather forecast, last minute aches and pains and the  
532 wish I would have of the training leading up to this point. The group was good spirited  
533 and their anxiety was starting to outwardly show. Pre was walking ahead of the group at  
534 a pretty good clip and Meb asked him if the race had already started. It was roughly 5:40  
535 and the race was only 20 minutes away.

536 Jimmy and Meb needed to check bags and everyone wanted to use the restroom one last  
537 time before the start of the race. Jimmy and Meb went to check their bags and Dena went  
538 to use the restroom. Pre was trying to get a signal on his GPS and was getting nervous  
539 that he hadn't gotten a signal yet and he still needed to use the restroom. He started  
540 talking to the GPS and telling it to get a signal as he moved to different locations trying to  
541 get a signal. Pre asked me to hold his GPS while he went to use the restroom.

542 The bag check line was relatively long for a small race and Jimmy and Meb were  
543 pressing to get their bags checked and get to the restroom prior to the start of the race.  
544 They were headed to the porta-potties as the gun sounded starting the wheel-chair race.  
545 The wheel chair event starts 5 minutes prior to the marathon. Pre and Dena heard the  
546 start of the race and Pre collected his GPS and he and Dena went to the start line ahead of  
547 Jimmy and Meb. I watched Pre and Dena walk to the start-line and carry on a  
548 conversation. Jimmy and Meb nervously waited in line to use the porta-potties and  
549 seemed to be a little concerned. They finished up and walked to the start-line just as a

550 local high school student began playing the national anthem. Jimmy and Meb blended  
551 into the crowd containing 650 marathon hopefuls and found some space around Pre.  
552 The crowd respectfully listened as the anthem was played. They applauded as the  
553 anthem concluded and a buzz began to emerge from the runners preparing to tackle 26.2  
554 miles. The energy was very positive and I could hear total strangers wishing each other  
555 luck and success on the race. It seemed more like a class reunion than a group of  
556 strangers. The race director began the countdown to the beginning of the race and the  
557 gun sounded. 650 runners, smiling ear to ear ran past the small crowd of family and  
558 friends who made it to the start-line so early on a Saturday morning.

559 I watched as the runners as they completed the first half mile of the race in and out of the  
560 streets of downtown. The 650 runners were beginning to spread out as the faster runners  
561 pulled away from the pack and the slower runners fell off of the frantic pace of the start.  
562 Pre , Meb and Jimmy were together in the front third of the pack and Dena lagged back in  
563 the back third of the pack. I watched all of them disappear onto the course.

564 I walked around the start area and observed family and friends planning their strategies  
565 for getting to different sections of the course to watch and cheer on their marathon  
566 hopefuls. Some had bikes, while others pushed children in strollers to support mom or  
567 dad. There was a sense of pride and responsibility from each of these dedicated  
568 supporters. I walked towards mile 9 on the course and was going to try and watch the  
569 group at that point. I didn't realize that mile 9 was not actually on the road, but on a trail  
570 instead. By time I arrived a point along the course to watch the group, Jimmy, Meb and  
571 Pre had already passed. I got there just in time to see the 170, soon to be 171 marathon  
572 man jog passed right at a 4:30 pace and to see Dena.

573 Dena exited the trail all smiles as she was greeted by a small group of cheering  
574 supporters. Her hands were relaxed and her pace very consistent. She waved and then  
575 gave me the two-thumbs up sign, and stated the race was going well. She grinned and  
576 then told me that she'd see me at the finish. I started to walk towards the finish as Dena  
577 continued along the course.

578 I saw a big pack of the 5k runners heading towards the finish line and I went up to the  
579 course to watch. These runners were excited and proud of what they were doing as well.  
580 Their faces much like the marathon hopefuls in many ways. I listened as some of the  
581 spectators chatted about the dedication o the 5k runners and the admiration for the half  
582 and full marathon runners. In their eyes, they were all simply runners. I overheard a  
583 group who stated that they wanted to train and run a race like this. The conversation  
584 seemed to be centered on being a runner. The runners were of all shapes, sizes and age.  
585 I watched as the winners of the half marathon sprinted towards the stadium and how  
586 people watched in amazement. The full marathon winners were not far behind due to the  
587 staggered start. The streets were full with a mix of 5k runners, half marathon runners,  
588 marathon runners and hundreds of people supporting family and friends as they competed  
589 in the races. I had a brief conversation with a man that that was hurt during training, but  
590 traveled from Texas to support his running partners.  
591 He told me how difficult it was to simply watch the race and not participate. He said it is  
592 something that he is said he did once. He stated that watching from side reminded him of  
593 how much of a privilege it is to complete a marathon. He said that it is easy to get caught  
594 up in times and goals, and sometimes you just need to be reminded of the honor, joy and

595 privilege being a runner truly is. I shook his hand and headed into the stadium to get a  
596 good view of the finish line.

597 I eagerly awaited Jimmy, Dena, Meb and Pre and watched the runners complete the  
598 various distances they were running in at the 50 yard-line of the stadium. The  
599 announcers were calling out the names and locations of many of the marathon and half  
600 marathon finishers as they approached the finish-line. Many runners raised their arms in  
601 success as they crossed the finish. Some purely stopped their watches and some were  
602 looking for their family and friends in the stadium.

603 Jimmy was the first of the group to enter the stadium. I saw him exit the tunnel and dash  
604 towards the finish-line. He looked at the stands as he ran the 50 yards to the finish. He  
605 smiled as the announcer called his name out and strided towards the finish. Once he  
606 crossed the line he grabbed a milar blanket and his medal. He exited the chutes and  
607 looked around the stadium. I thought he was looking for Pre's family, but then it just  
608 seemed like he was taking in the moment.

609 Just then Pre's family began to cheer and I saw him coming out of the tunnel. He looked  
610 exhausted. His fist were tight and his head looking towards the turf. He wasn't going to  
611 finish in under 3:30, but I was pretty sure that he was going to have a personal best. He  
612 lifted his head and saw his family cheering for him and he raised his arms as the  
613 announcer called his name. He looked around the finish area and proceeded to get his  
614 blanket, medal and a drink. He quickly found Jimmy and they began to talk. They gave  
615 each other a high-five and nodded in approval of whatever the conversation held. Jimmy  
616 went and retrieved the bag he checked and he and Pre began to take pictures with the

617 football and Pre's wife. Meb's wife was speaking with Pre and Jimmy and then left the  
618 stadium.

619 After some pictures Pre and his wife left the field and joined us in the stands. They were  
620 greeted by hugs and cheers from their family. Pre said that he left it all out on the course.  
621 He said that he had forgotten what it felt like to hurt after a race. His last couple of  
622 marathons were challenging, but not the same as racing a marathon. He said he was on  
623 pace to break 3:30, but he physically couldn't do it. He stressed how much he  
624 appreciated the distance. He also said he lost Meb in the first half of the race, but he was  
625 looking strong. Pre returned to the field to take some more pictures with Jimmy and  
626 interact with some of the other finishers.

627 Dena was the next member of the group through the tunnel. She looked as steady  
628 moving towards the finish as she did at mile 9. Her hands were a little tenser, but her  
629 head was held high and she surveyed the stadium as she approached the finish-line. She  
630 cruised across the finish-line and smiled as she received her medal. She strolled through  
631 the chutes and was greeted by Pre, his wife and Jimmy. They each took turns  
632 congratulating Dena and they started taking more photos.

633 The race was nearly 5 hours old and there was no sign of Meb. Pre and Dena came back  
634 into the stands and Dena relayed that she had passed a very disheartened and hurting Meb  
635 later in the race. She said she could see him from a distance and she could tell that he  
636 wasn't feeling well. She also told us that his wife was out on the course with him. Dena  
637 then related how pleased she was with her overall time and the experience she had on the  
638 course. They all returned to the field to get something to drink.



639 I saw Meb's wife re-enter the stadium and heads towards the medical tent. I was  
640 beginning to worry. She passed the tent without stopping and met up with the rest of the  
641 group. Just a couple of minutes later, Meb entered the stadium. He was tense, leaning to  
642 the right and slumped over. His head was looking directly at the turf. He slowly jogged  
643 towards the finish-line. He crossed the line and was immediately greeted by a volunteer.  
644 After a very brief conversation, Meb collected his medal and blanket and exited the  
645 chute. He seemed to be looking for something. Jimmy, Pre and Dena congratulated him,  
646 but he still seemed like he was looking for something. He walked towards the medical  
647 tent and grabbed something to drink and a popsicle. He really wasn't up for pictures and  
648 the group exited the field.  
649 With this I concluded my observation for the day.

**Appendix E: Post-race Interviews**

- 1 Post-race interview
- 2 Participant: Dena
- 3 Date: 01Jul09
- 4 Location: 2258 Scheutz
- 5
- 6 Tim: What did you achieve, accomplish and learn through your experience?
- 7 Dena: I was in better shape than I thought. Um.. actually achieved the reason I like to do
- 8 it again.
- 9 Tim: Say a little more.
- 10 Dena: Umm...The past couple of marathons have been atrocious experiences and ( ) I
- 11 had an awesome experience. Fun. I realized again why I do it.
- 12 Tim: What made this one fun?
- 13 Dena: I talked to people. I made friends. I actually played leap frog. I talked much more
- 14 than I ever did. Um... it was a new course. I wasn't really worried about time (laughter)
- 15 until the end.
- 16 Tim: So what was your overall time?
- 17 Dena: 4:49
- 18 Tim: How does that relate to your other marathon times?
- 19 Dena: It's my second fasted marathon.
- 20 Tim: What do you think made you so fast?

21 Dena: I don't know (Laughter) I didn't hit the wall. Maybe I was more relaxed. I didn't  
22 even look at my watch until mile 20. The heat temperature was right too. Nice temp.

23 The wall didn't happen until mile 23 NOT mile 11.

24 Tim: What did the wall look like this time?

25 Dena: Um.. this time... it was like I thought I was moving and I just wasn't moving. It  
26 was like a progressive thing. I started walking longer between water stops.

27 Tim: What was going through your head when you hit the wall?

28 Dena: Well at mile 20, I realized that I was very close to a PR. I thought I could do it.. I  
29 didn't want to go there but it did. Because that is the only time I looked at my watch. It  
30 was at mile 20, but when I hit the wall I thought ... oh well. What the hell was I

31 thinking? It went back to the training. My training. I mean the twelve week training is  
32 ( ) I mean you're in shape, but you need that extra couple weeks in the full schedule. I  
33 honestly believe in that. In order to get you through the last 6 miles. And it will happen.

34 Tim: What did you do different at mile 20?

35 Dena: Me. What did I do different?

36 Tim: Yes. You looked at your watch and...

37 Dena: I looked at the clock and thought that can't be.. it says 3:35.. that can't possibly be.  
38 Because all of my 20 milers were right around the 4 hour range.... My two training runs.  
39 But I looked at my watch and went "holy shit!" And then my mind immediately goes to

40 "I'm only an hour from a PR. With a half of a marathon left. Because the last 6 is a half.

41 Tim: Did you pick the pace up?

42 Dena: I did.. I think I did.. I'm pretty sure I did. I didn't look at my watch again though.  
43 I ran into a lady that was running way to fast for me. That's how I knew. Which might  
44 have played into the wall.

45 Tim: What did you learn through this process?

46 Dena: That it can be fun when you talk with people... most of the time I'm not a big  
47 talker.....

48 Tim: How is this different from what you expected?

49 Dena: I thought I was going to hurt a lot more. This is probably the least trained I have  
50 been. I didn't expect.. It wasn't as bad.. I wasn't as sore as ( ) as I thought I'd be.

51 Tim: What effect does this experience have on your life in general?

52 Dena: I can say that I've been.. I've seen Touch Down Jesus. I touched the field. Umm.  
53 I always like to be a new place that I've never been. Let's face it. When people ask you  
54 where you run marathons.. they're surprised that you do them at all.. and it's fun to tell  
55 them about the different places.

56 Tim: What was the most rewarding part of your experience?

57 Dena: Anytime that I cross the line, I think that it is rewarding. It just reminds me that  
58 you can pretty much do anything. ( Laughter) And I needed that!

59 Tim: Why is that?

60 Dena: Just ... everything.. you know.. It's been a challenging life. I keep it as a constant  
61 reminder that if I can do 26.2 then I can....I can do this little thing at work.

62 Tim: What was the most challenging part of your experience?

63 Dena: For me.. Even during the training and stuff.. I keep comparing myself to my PR.

64 So I was looking the whole time. That's the reason that I left my Garmin at home. I was

65 comparing myself to 2 years ago when I was in a hell of a lot better shape. I thought.

66 That's why when you look at my blogs I'm constantly looking at previous times. I was

67 concerned about being slow, slow, slow, slow, slow, slow, slow,...

68 Tim: When during the race did that concern go away?

69 Dena: I decided that before I was going to go that my goal was a nice experience. I

70 didn't want a time. I didn't want whatever.. that's why I left my Garmin at home. I said

71 that I'm human so I will wear a watch, but...

72 Tim: Was there any part of the course where you realized where you needed to be with

73 regards to time?

74 Dena: Umm.. there were a couple of running guys that we would pass and forth.. played

75 leap frog with. They would say "oh you're running a good pace." But to be real honest.

76 I didn't realize what I was doing until I hit mile 20, and I realized.. Wow..

77 Tim: What went through your head when you passed Meb?

78 Dena: Oh. That's a mixed emotion. (Laughter) Umm. I wanted to stop.. well at first... I

79 always want Meb to do good. He's a friend of mine and I know that he has his goal. We

80 saw each other many times on the course because it is an out and back course. He

81 seemed to be doing fine. The last time I was not really looking at it, but it took me a mile

82 to catch him.. It was up and down hills. He was wearing that shirt and I saw it and I was

83 saying "oh no Meb, oh no. Please don't let me pass you Meb." And when I saw him on

84 the side, I wanted to stop and help him, but I also know that he... yeah I felt pretty bad

85 passing him, but I offered to help and I know that he doesn't like to be mothered.

86 Tim: What were your thoughts after you passed him?

87 Dena: I talked to Melanie. His wife was out on the course. She was there when I hit the  
88 wall.. She told me I was looking good. She gave me a little pep. I told her that he wasn't  
89 doing well. He was stretching. She said "really" and I said "yeah." I asked him if he  
90 wanted anything and he said "no." I carried on because he does not like that. She goes  
91 "thank-you." I'll tell you what though. He does finish. But I really wish that I wouldn't  
92 have seen him that far ahead. To see him... it was a hill and I saw him walking way  
93 before I got to him. I was going "run Meb, run." (Laughter)

94 Tim: So for future races...

95 Dena: Oh I crossed the line plotting Memphis. I wish that I could have Meb's legs. Or  
96 if I could give him my head... I think that I'm a stubborn little person.

97 Tim: Now that I have completed a marathon, I hope to...

98 Dena: I crossed the line plotting Memphis.

99 Tim: What do you mean?

100 Dena: Training. Get ready to run another marathon.

101 Tim: What goal did you set for Memphis?

102 Dena: A PR! I really think that if I spend 18 weeks training it's really possible. Because  
103 Notre Dame.. They talked about it being hilly, but I didn't really notice the hills. Even  
104 my 12 week schedule was slacking.

105 Tim: What one lesson would you teach someone preparing for a marathon and why?

106 Dena: Enjoy it! Relax. Enjoy the experience. Because to be honest, you just don't  
107 know when you're going to get it. Because I didn't think that it was going to be like that.  
108 But I thought Chicago was going to be excellent and it was burn your retinas out  
109 (Laughter)

110 Tim: Why?

111 Dena: Because I think that sometimes when you're doing it and you're mentally is paying  
112 attention to the watch then you're missing out on something. It takes away form the  
113 experience. I've talked to people. They don't even know some of the sites from the  
114 course or they didn't see the big dome or the .....Do you know how cool it was to round  
115 the corner at mile 25 and see all of the runners and that gold dome? Now I was a little bit  
116 bitter when we hit the stadium and we has to run all of the way to the other side to get in.

117 Tim: What was it like to run through the tunnel?

118 Dena: I almost cried.

119 Tim: Why is that?

120 Dena: I don't know.. you kind of just ( ) you just realized what you did. You just got  
121 done. You're emotionally spent and your running down that tunnel and they have the  
122 fight song playing and you're thinking like. Oohooohoa! Sometimes that happens. One  
123 other marathon I almost started crying at the end. I don't know why...

124 Tim: You write people's names on your shoes...

125 Dena: I do .

126 Tim: Tell me about that.

127 Dena: On one shoe there was two Joes. One was Joe Brady, he got kicked out of Notre  
128 Dame. He was my inherited father's father who got kicked out of Notre Dame, but was  
129 always a Notre Dame fan. I lost him a couple of years ago. My friend, Tammy's father  
130 was a very big Notre Dame fan and he passed away this year. It kind of puts everything  
131 into perspective.

132 Tim: What's the purpose of having them on your shoes?

133 Dena: Well on the other shoe I put my dad's name. It just reminds me and taking them  
134 with me. It's always good to make it about something else. Make the old man.... I think  
135 the Joes would have loved to have been on the field.

136 Tim: What was the most significant moment of your experience?

137 Dena: ( ) It's either.. turning the corner at mile 25 and see the dome or realizing that I was  
138 at mile 20 at 3:35. I was like.. WOW! Because it is two different things, but still.. they  
139 were both significant moments.. just for different reasons.

140 Tim: Have you experienced any changes in yourself as a result of this experience? Dena:

141 Happier.. I don't know. I look at running better. I'm going to train more, I'm excited  
142 about it. I would like to do a little more strength training. And I'm not going to start  
143 getting clock obsessed like I had been doing. This training session was the most clock  
144 obsessed I'd ever been. Which is weird because it is the slowest I was running too.

145 Tim: Thanks for everything!

146

147



148 Post-race interview

149 Participant: Meb

150 Date: 02Jul09

151 Location: Toolen's Running Start

152

153 Tim: What did you achieve, accomplish and learn through your experience?

154 Meb: Hmm. ( ) can we come back to this question.

155 Tim: Sure.

156 Meb: I have to think about that one for a little while.

157 Tim: How is this different from what you expected?

158 Meb: I knew I went out too fast and things deteriorated very quickly from there. The  
159 crap that happened the night before. I didn't expect that. To be honest, nothing in that 24  
160 hour period went the way I thought it would have. At all... you kind of think about these  
161 things in your head and how things are going to come together. Ummm. And nothing  
162 went as I expected. I really expected to have a much different outcome then I did.  
163 Ummm..... but looking back, I can pinpoint about 10 things I did wrong or incorrectly. I  
164 was trained much better than my result. Which is actually no different then most my  
165 races ever.

166 Tim: What effect does this experience have on your life in general?

167 Meb: Actually, I feel stronger and better than I ever had before.

168 Tim: Why is that?

169 Meb: I don't know. I went into this just wanting to get my confidence back and I had one  
170 of the worst races of my life. And I feel better about running than I ever have before. I

171 don't know. It sort of re-grouped me somehow. I found my center again. I didn't really  
172 stop. I took four days off and went right back into it. Yeah...I don't know... usually I  
173 take 6 or 7 months off.

174 Tim: What was the most rewarding part of your experience?

175 Meb: Finishing. I mean dragging myself across that line. Just getting there and beating  
176 the half marathon walkers. There was a group of them towards the end and I was  
177 desperately trying to get in front of them.

178 Tim: What was the most challenging part of your experience?

179 Meb: Mentally, when things go wrong and you're a long way from the end, things get  
180 really challenging. Ummm.. the most challenging was mile 17 forward. And knowing I  
181 had to get all of the way back. Every step you took in one direction you knew you had to  
182 take back and it was hurting every step. By mile 19 I was done. I literally wasn't  
183 running or walking, I was leaning against a tree.

184 Tim: What was the course like at mile 19?

185 Meb: Ummm. Actually, you were already coming back from the out and back. It was  
186 pretty nice. It was fairly flat, in a park. There were some trees there. It was a beautiful  
187 course. I'd run it again in a heartbeat. That's the worst that I have felt that early in a  
188 race. Even St. Louis and some of my other bad ones, I've never felt that bad at that point  
189 before. I have a new pain threshold.

190 Tim: What was challenging in general for you?

191 Meb: The heat... which still does. I have a real issue with the heat. As far as the training  
192 was concerned, I had some of the best long runs that I have ever had. So, I know I was  
193 ready, but I didn't take care of things the way I should have. I think that I was almost

194 overconfident. I went out 20-30 seconds per mile faster than I trained for. Then I didn't  
195 touch any Gatorade until mile 5... which was just stupid.

196 Tim: What caused the increased speed?

197 Meb: Umm... I'm not sure. I started with a group of people. There were probably 6 of  
198 us and it just felt good at that point. It really did. It was cool and still sort of dark out. I  
199 didn't feel what I thought I would at that point. I felt very, very strong.

200 Tim: When did you lose those 6 folks?

201 Meb: I actually lost them about mile 12. That's the point I realized that this was not  
202 going to be good. I knew there was no way that I could maintain that all of the way to the  
203 end. But it was too late at that point.

204 Tim: Now that I have completed that marathon, what's next?

205 Meb: I'm thinking about Lewis and Clark and I'm signed up for Memphis.

206 Tim: What one lesson would you teach someone preparing for a marathon and why?

207 Meb: If it's warm out... definitely hydrate every opportunity you get. Get plenty of sleep  
208 the night before. Don't lose your keys the night before the run.

209 Tim: What about your wife running the half?

210 Meb: I hate her (Laughter) I'm glad she did it, but if she trained a little tiny bit she would  
211 be extremely fast.

212 Tim: Back to the initial question. What did you achieve, accomplish and learn through  
213 your experience?

214 Meb: Yeah.. I took a long time off from running marathons. A really long time off from  
215 taking running seriously. This sort of brought me back to that again. I needed to go do  
216 this. I needed some structured event to aim towards, to push me back into that... hmmm..

217 I don't know. I learned a lot., it's just an awesome distance and I think that anytime you  
218 get to run it, it is a privilege. To be able to finish it. I did not have a good time, but there  
219 is something that you get from that distance, whether it is a good day or bad day, that you  
220 don't get from anything else. At least I don't. A half doesn't give you that. Nothing  
221 really affects you that way. So it was nice to get back into it.

222 Tim: Is there anything else you want to add?

223 Meb: Yeah... It was very hard. (Laughter)

224 Tim: Thank you very much!

225

226 Post-race interview

227 Participant: Pre

228 Date: 30Jun09

229 Location: Pre's House

230

231 Tim: What did you achieve, accomplish and learn through your experience?

232 Pre: I achieved a personal record. I ran a 3:33:24. Which was exactly 1 minute and 1

233 second better than I have ever run a marathon before in my life. That's what I achieved..

234 it's measurable. There are other things that I obviously achieved.

235 Tim: Like what?

236 Pre: Um... I don't know. What I was trying to think about.. Like ( ) I came into it

237 without a full training session. I knew I was in shape, but I knew I wasn't in great shape.

238 And I was cautiously optimistic about whether I could run a 3:30, but I thought anything

239 is possible. And more than that, I was really surprised what I could do for 22 miles. I

240 was really surprised that I kept under an 8 minute pace for 22 miles. I actually.. Um.. At

241 22 miles I think I had .. I could have added 40 seconds to every mile and still came in at

242 3:30. I had a good thing built up. I carried a good pace that entire time. I was really

243 surprised and I learned that I was capable of more than what I did. And I was able to do

244 it. It gave me a big confidence boost for the next marathon. Because I know with the

245 proper training I can run faster, a lot faster, for the next marathon. As hard as it was, it

246 just felt good. Looking back on it now, the first 19 miles were felt really good. That last

247 7 and especially the last 5 felt like shit. That's alright.. I still walked away feeling good.

248 Tim: How did you know you were shifting from feeling good to not so?

249 Pre: Oh! Oh! My legs... well...I was running great and I was keeping pace and I was  
250 doing everything that I needed to do. I was taking GU at the right spots, and I was taking  
251 water. The weather was cooperating very well. It was cool to start and it never really got  
252 real hot. The sun was out, but it felt good. I liked the course, but at around 19 miles I  
253 could feel my body... you know it got a lot harder. It got harder to carry under 8s and  
254 then the 8s came and went. And then the 8:15s... 8:10s, 8:15s and then 8:30s. I know  
255 with 5 miles left, my breathing was labored and I knew it would be very very hard. I said  
256 to myself “gosh I wish I could quit right now.” I did, I really wanted to quit. It was  
257 horrible. Usually when you’re running you think 5 miles.. I can do 5 miles easy. This  
258 one. I knew that the last 5 miles were going to be really really hard. It was awful. I had  
259 forgotten what it felt like to feel that bad at the end of a race. Not bad because I was  
260 running bad. Bad because my body was depleted. I didn’t have anything left in the tank.  
261 Tim: How is this different from what you expected?

262 Pre: Well ( ) different in the beginning was the number of people. It was a much smaller  
263 race than I have ever been involved with before. Coming from Disney, Chicago and even  
264 St. Louis... Even St. Louis everyone started together so you had 8,000 people starting  
265 together. Even though the full people split off from the half. At this one, the full started  
266 together, but there were only 650 people registered, and probably 600 people started the  
267 race. I was 10 feet from the starting line, so right off the bat it was different. I knew that  
268 there wasn’t going to be a lot of crowd support which really didn’t bother me so much. I  
269 anticipated running the entire thing by myself. I got kind of surprised because I got to run  
270 with Jimmy Toolen for the better part of nine miles. And then I ran away from him and  
271 he caught me towards the end again. Um.. And that was really nice. So that was

272 something different and something that I didn't expect. Umm.. What was the question  
273 again?

274 Tim: How is this different from what you expected?

275 Pre: Um.. that was probably the main thing. Just the actual race and how that went..um..  
276 ( ) that's about it.

277 Tim: What effect does this experience have on your life in general?

278 Pre: Um.. I would say in general it kind of reinforced some things that I kind of new, but  
279 you know sometimes need reinforcing. The more that I thought about how I ran and  
280 trained .. it kind of transcends into everything that you do. If you train properly and you  
281 put the work into it. You're going to get the results you are looking for the majority of  
282 the time. I trained hard, and I put a lot of work in, but I didn't do the full training. I  
283 probably could have trained harder if time could have allotted. It showed in the last five  
284 miles. My body broke down I wasn't able to hold the pace that I wanted to do. That  
285 directly reflects the fact that you have to respect the distance and respect the training. I  
286 always respect the distance and I respect the training however, sometimes life gets in the  
287 way. You're not always able to do everything you want to do. And it's something you  
288 just have to live with. I thought, ahh I could be mad or kind of down on myself because I  
289 didn't get my goal. I didn't get my 3:30, but I ran as hard as I could. I did everything I  
290 could out there and I didn't leave anything on the course. I mean, I did everything I  
291 could. If I would have come into that stadium sprinting then.. you know.. I would have  
292 thought, Oh man I had something left. But I came into that stadium barely jogging, or it  
293 felt like I was barely jogging. So I gave it everything that I had just to get where I was.  
294 That made me feel good in general. That I was able to accomplish that. That was a big

295 thing for me. At 5 miles left, I had that turning point and I knew at 4-3 miles left I knew I  
296 wasn't going to be able to do this. I was starting to hit 9 minute miles. I couldn't do it. I  
297 would run and I just couldn't go any faster. I'd started going faster and my quads and my  
298 hamstrings would start to cramp. I would slow down and start walking, which I don't  
299 normally do a lot. I was walking outside of the water stops. Just to give my legs a  
300 break.. then I start-up again and go for 10 steps and then I would feel bad again, and I  
301 would have to slow down again. I kind of knew at that point... man I'm not going to do  
302 it. But I didn't get down on myself because I knew it wasn't for a lack of effort. These  
303 legs just didn't have it in them. I was giving everything that I had to it. So then it  
304 became a point of where I was going to be at. I wanted to make sure that I could get  
305 under my PR. I was figuring I could, but as it wore on I was getting to a point where I  
306 was beginning to question that. I knew that I needed to move it and work as hard as I  
307 can. The last mile was really, really, really tough, but it was very satisfying coming into  
308 that stadium. I didn't accomplish the main goal, but I did accomplish some goals.

309 Tim: What was the most rewarding part of your experience?

310 Pre: Um. The finish! Coming into the stadium and hearing the applause, which was  
311 being piped in, but coming into the stadium and looking up to the right and seeing my  
312 daughter, I remember seeing my daughter and my in-laws up there. I remember waving  
313 and I remember them seeing me. I thought it was awesome that they were there to see  
314 me finish. I don't think they realize what pain I was going through, and what it means..  
315 that's ok. But when I crossed the finish line, and the announcer said " and now finishing  
316 the marathon from Fairview Heights, IL.. Pre Bruegemann." And then it just hits you.  
317 It's like... you just can't describe.. it's like your overwhelmed and your emotions are



318 totally overwhelmed. It's a feeling that I've only had when my kids were born, which  
319 was a much more important moment in my life, but it's such a personal accomplishment.  
320 Everyone is. It was like that for my first marathon. I remember crossing the finish line at  
321 my first marathon, and the first person that I saw was someone we run with. I remember  
322 saying "I can't believe that I just did that!" And when I did the Goofy Challenge. And  
323 with this one I felt the same way because I got a PR. It was just a wave of emotion. I  
324 was just out there for 3 and a half hours and I pushed myself further than I ever pushed  
325 myself before. It was.. when he announced that I finished the marathon, it was awesome.  
326 I still felt like complete shit, but I still had that wave of emotion. It's almost like you  
327 want to cry. It's amazing, it's an awesome feeling! I keep going back to crossing that  
328 line, that feeling and knowing that you accomplished something that only 1% of the  
329 population has ever accomplished. 99% of the people in the world never run a marathon.

330 Tim: What was the most challenging part of your experience?

331 Pre: The whole experience? Probably the training. Finding the time for the training. I  
332 think that finding the time for the training and getting the training in is always the hardest  
333 thing. With Maura running the half marathon, which by the way was pretty cool having  
334 her out there when I finished the race and she finished the half with a PR. It was pretty  
335 awesome having her running the race too. Trying to find the time, trying to make the  
336 time to run... a lot of times you can find it, but you're tired from other things. You're  
337 tired from the kids, you're tired from going out the night before, you're tired from work  
338 and you don't want to get up at 5 in the morning and run. As far as the race. The most  
339 challenging part was the last 5 or 6 miles. I had nothing left. I finished on sheer will  
340 power.

341 Tim: Now that I have completed a marathon what's next?

342 Pre: Memphis! That will be my next marathon. Now I want to focus on running a fast  
343 5k. I'd like to PR a 5k. I don't know if that is going to happen. My PR right now is  
344 19:09 and it would have been 3 years ago this September. I don't know if I am going to  
345 specifically train for a 5k because Memphis training starts in 4 weeks. Memphis is going  
346 to be in the cold. It going to be nice training for that. I came out of this marathon injury  
347 free which was awesome. It's only the second time that I came out of a marathon injury  
348 free and able to run. So I'm really excited about the prospects for the next marathon.  
349 This one taught me that I'm capable of a lot more. I'm capable of running faster. I can  
350 do it if I put my mind and body to the training. I'm excited about trying that out.

351 Tim: What one lesson would you teach someone preparing for a marathon and why?

352 Pre: You have to respect the marathon. You have to respect what it's all about. The  
353 distance just creeps up on you. I'd say especially the last six miles. People think that  
354 because they ran 20 miles as part of their training that they understand the challenge. The  
355 marathon has two halves. The first 20 miles and the last 6.2 miles. It is not 13.1 and 13.1  
356 Your body is completely depleted in the last 6 miles and you really have to train to be  
357 able to handle those.. to be able to do what you do. I would also stress pushing yourself  
358 and never giving up. I think that's important. I'm a big fan of people that finish  
359 marathons. Like Meb. As much as his head gets in the way or as much as he gives up on  
360 his times, he always finishes. That's a lot of determination. When you can finish even  
361 when you feel like complete dog crap. Just keep going.... I think that there is a lot to be  
362 learned about that.

363 Tim: What was the most significant moment of your experience?

364 Pre: I'd say the last 5 miles. As bad as I felt, I just kept going. The last 5 miles leading  
365 to the finish... just knowing that I did it. It's a real confidence booster to know that you  
366 can persevere through something so hard, so difficult. It's very nice to have that feeling.

367 Tim: During the last 5 miles, what were some of your thoughts?

368 Pre: I wanted to die, I wanted to quit. I can't believe that this is still going on. Um... I  
369 feel so horrible, I should have trained more. I wished I would have trained more. I can't  
370 believe that I missed that week. Looking back on it, I wouldn't trade that week for  
371 anything. Because the experiences that I had during that week through my work was  
372 something that I needed to experience. It was worth it. Sometimes you have to make  
373 that trade off. I'm not a professional runner, so I have to learn that some things are more  
374 important than running. Sometimes running is more important. I've come to accept that.  
375 Some of the other thoughts were, I can't believe that I still have two miles to go. When  
376 Jimmy Toolen passed me, it was "son of a bitch!" I really did, I thought.. he told me at  
377 the beginning of the race that he wanted to run a 3:40.. I told him I wanted to run a 3:30.  
378 I made no secrets about it. We went out together and everything was going great. I was  
379 doing great and he was doing great and I kind of left him. That was not big deal,  
380 sometimes he would fall back a little bit. A little over 8 minute miles. It's kind of the  
381 unwritten rule... run your own race. At mile 25 I had just run a 10:30 mile. I looked  
382 down and said if I run another 10:30 mile I am not going to PR. I felt horrible. I said I  
383 have to go faster. So I tried to go faster, and then all of a sudden I heard " Hey buddy!"  
384 and I thought oh great it's Jimmy. Passed me and said 'go with me!' I said "alright!" I  
385 went with him for about 50 yards and he kept going and I couldn't go any further with

386 him. I thought.... Son of a gun, I thought I at least had Jimmy. I've never beat him in a  
387 marathon, so it would have been nice to finish ahead of him.

388 Tim: Have you experienced any changes in yourself as a result of this experience?

389 Pre: I'm more confident with my running. Anytime I do a marathon, it makes me more  
390 confident in general... at work, at home... because I know I just my body through and  
391 my will power and my mind through something that is pretty awful.... Keeping it in  
392 context, it's not the worst thing in the world, but what you have to go through to finish a  
393 marathon is pretty demanding. It's very demanding on your time and your body. It just  
394 gives me more confidence. I can go through that stuff than I can go through a lot of other  
395 stuff. The marathon is physically hard, what I do at work is not physically hard, but I  
396 know that I can do it from my experiences with the marathon. If I'm strong enough to  
397 get through the marathon, then I'm strong enough to get through anything that work can  
398 throw at me or anything else that is thrown at me.

399 Tim: Thanks for everything!

400

401 Post-race interview

402 Participant: Jimmy

403 Date: 29Jun09

404 Location: Toolen's Running Start

405

406 Tim: What did you achieve, accomplish and learn through your experience?

407 Jimmy: What I achieved was that I can still run a nice easy marathon. I set out to run a  
408 nice and easy 8 minute pace, and I really wanted to go at an 8:30 pace, but I really  
409 thought that I could do 8 minutes. I thought if I could run with Pre, then we could keep a  
410 nice easy pace going and it was comfortable. And of course, Pre took off on me at mile  
411 9, but that's Ok because he thought he could go faster. That's fine with me. I did not  
412 have a problem with it. At mile 17.5, between 17 and 18, I felt comfortable. I couldn't  
413 figure out why I was passing people. It didn't feel... You know when you start passing  
414 people at mile 18 you think that you're going to die somewhere... some place it is going  
415 to catch me and I'm going to die. It was comfortable the last part of the marathon. I  
416 found that the training I did was right. I was prepared for that marathon, I was excited  
417 about finishing in the stadium. That's what drives me the whole time. That drive kept  
418 me feeling good. My legs weren't hurting, I wasn't getting dehydrated... um... I tried to  
419 pay attention to the next mile mark, and get to the next one. Just seeing the stadium  
420 drove me to the finish.

421 Tim: When you started passing people late in the race, what was going through your  
422 head.

423 Jimmy: When you see people ahead of you and you start catching them, you start to think  
424 whether you're picking up the pace or they're slowing down. If you pick up the pace too  
425 much it is going to hurt you for the last couple of miles. I wear my watch, but I don't pay  
426 attention to it. I pay more attention to my body and how I feel. I don't think I once hit a  
427 mile marker.. you know looked at my time (Laughter). I was listening to everyone  
428 around me, so you know what you're running unless you're really falling apart. You  
429 think that you're running 9 minute miles and you're really running 10 minute miles. I was  
430 thinking about my total time. If I could keep up this pace I could break 3:30, and that  
431 was kind of my ultimate goal. I thought if I could keep that pace up... the whole time  
432 you are going through your mind.. if I do this and this..... I would look at the time  
433 distance between each individual mile and just try to keep them at 8 minutes. I wasn't  
434 watching total time, just time between miles. I didn't worry about seconds and I was  
435 more relaxed and comfortable. I was comfortable, and not tight. I wasn't looking at my  
436 shoes. I was looking around at the stadium and thinking about finishing in the stadium.

437 Tim: When you finally saw the stadium, what were your thoughts?

438 Jimmy: I think I can make it. When I saw the stadium we got mixed in with the half  
439 marathon runners. It was kind of unreal because here I was running a marathon and I was  
440 passing the half marathon runners. Then you're thinking... oh shit maybe I am going too  
441 fast. I was passing people and thinking and the worst part of the stadium was in the  
442 tunnel. At mile 25.5, you know you're not too stable. And so we're going down the  
443 tunnel, which is downhill, and it's uneven in there. All of a sudden I started flying, not  
444 literally, down the tunnel and I thought oh crap, oh crap! I'm going to fall and hurt my  
445 knee or ankle and not be able to finish. I thought, if that happens I'm going to kill

446 myself. I'm going to get so mad... I'll crawl to that finish line if I have to. I slowed  
447 down and made it through. Once I hit the grass in the stadium, I didn't feel anything. I  
448 felt like I could run another marathon. You know, I felt that good. But I didn't want to  
449 run another marathon (Laughter).

450 Tim: Once you came through the tunnel and touched the grass, what kind of mental  
451 images did you have?

452 Jimmy: I always wanted to go to Notre Dame, I always wanted to attend school there, I  
453 always wanted to see a football game there... you kind of go through your head... Ara  
454 Parseghian.. even Devine. All of the ... Joe Montana, Theismann... they all ran through  
455 that tunnel just like I did. Students get to go to Notre Dame, never get to do that. This  
456 was a once in a lifetime experience and everything goes through your mind about some  
457 of the players that went there. Even.. I thought about Jerome Heaven from East St.  
458 Louis, and thinking how exciting it has to be to see the whole stadium full. And then I  
459 ran in there... it just gave me goose bumps.

460 Tim: How is this different from what you expected?

461 Jimmy: It was actually better. The course was a lot flatter than I thought it would be. I  
462 thought that they said it wasn't as flat as Chicago, but there were some hills. I didn't  
463 think that the hills were too bad. I really can't remember any hills. Going through the  
464 neighbors, going on sidewalks and through the grass was a little bit different. There  
465 wasn't a lot of crowd support, but I wasn't expecting that in South Bend, IN. I knew it  
466 wasn't going to be like Chicago.

467 Tim: How was the weather?

468 Jimmy: That's one thing that I don't worry about. I don't worry about it because  
469 whatever it is when I get there is what it is. I you think about it and worry about it, then  
470 that is just one more thing to worry about. I was more worried about my body. Whether  
471 it was going to hold up, whether my knee was going to hold up. I hurt my knee one or  
472 two weeks before the race. I never worry about the weather. If it is going t be cold, or if  
473 it is going to be hot.... Well I hope it's not too hot when I finish (Laughter). I think that  
474 starting at 6 o'clock, mentally put me at ease. Most marathons don't start until 7:30 or  
475 8:00. So by starting at 6 we are nearly half way through when the other races would just  
476 be starting.

477 Tim: What effect does this experience have on your life in general?

478 Jimmy: I can say that I've been to Notre Dame. I can say that I've been on the football  
479 field. I can tell the guys that went to the University of Florida, my buddies from high  
480 school, that I carried a football on the field at Notre Dame. I carried the ball into the end  
481 zone! Yeah, I think that's something that I've always wanted.

482 Tim: What was the most rewarding part of your experience?

483 Jimmy: Probably running down the tunnel and into the stadium. Oh yeah, and one other  
484 thing. Getting our pictures back and seeing Touch Down Jesus in the picture behind me.  
485 I haven't ordered that picture yet, but I'm going to. I think that was neat. I never worry  
486 about where I finish in my age group. Now I don't I think I used to worry about that, but  
487 now I really don't get excited about getting first. I do, but I know that there are a lot less  
488 runners out there in my age group. If there are 200 people in my age group then that's  
489 exciting, but when there are 50, 40, or even 30.... I tell people that the people in my age



490 group have either died or quit running, but finishing first in my age group was pretty neat  
491 too.

492 Tim: What was the most challenging part of your experience?

493 Jimmy: Probably the most challenging was to get Paula to relax and not get nervous.

494 Trying to tell her that you don't have to be first, finish in the top five. It really didn't

495 have anything to do with my running. It is always about trying to get her under control.

496 Because I know how nervous she gets before a race.

497 Tim: Now that I have completed this marathon, what's up next for you?

498 Jimmy: Well, there's a half marathon in Chicago in August. I just did a 5k, but that

499 doesn't count. We have the New York City Marathon coming up in November, and the

500 half marathon back in Memphis in December. I would bet \$1000 that we will go back to

501 Boston. 2010 has a nice ring to it.

502 Tim: How are you going to apply what you have learned in this marathon?

503 Jimmy: Well, I ran a lot with Paula. If I can keep up with her pace, then I won't have

504 any problem on race day. We didn't do 3 or 4 20s. We only did two 20s. I really ran

505 with Pre for most of the runs, so we went a little slower. But we did keep a good pace

506 though.

507 Tim: What one lesson would you teach someone preparing for a marathon?

508 Jimmy: The one lesson is to take it one step at a time. Don't worry about the overall

509 picture. Just take a slower look at it, think I'm going to finish the marathon; the goal is

510 not to beat people. It is to finish. Don't worry about your time, especially for beginners.

511 A lot of people get carried away with their training. When I say take a slower look, what

512 I mean is don't just jump out there and start running 12, 14, 16 miles. Do whatever your

513 training schedule calls for. Don't over extend on your training. If you are planning to  
514 run a 2:30 or 2:40 marathon your training is going to look a lot different. You need to  
515 plan on 100 mile weeks. Beginner runners, just get through the marathon. Experienced  
516 runners, you have to include speed work in your training and keep a good pace on their  
517 long runs. They can't just take it easy, if they are trying to finish in a certain time.

518 Tim: What is your advice when something doesn't go right in training or on race day?

519 Jimmy: I think that you have to look at... 1. What is the temperature of the race what  
520 was the weather that day. How did I prepare the week or two for the race. How did I  
521 hydrate? Did I get too nervous? I really mean, did I take it too serious? An example is  
522 giving up beer for six weeks because you think it will dehydrate you... I you want a beer,  
523 take a beer. When you go to a marathon, think about the location. Go for the race, but  
524 enjoy the city, the course, the time with your friends..... 18 weeks of training is worse  
525 than the marathon.. make sure you have something to look forward to. It will help you  
526 through the training and the race.

527 Tim: Anything else?

528 Jimmy: I enjoyed the training, There as no hot weather. I missed running with a big  
529 group. This group was fun, but it is not as big as previous races. I look forward to  
530 getting the bigger group back together. I enjoyed running with Pre this time. He and I  
531 fed off of each other. The funniest thing.. I won't ever forget this. We were running at  
532 mile 5 and running through our first subdivision. We had to turn left, turn left and then  
533 turn right. Everyone in front of us were turning right and there was a lady in front of us,  
534 and Pre says " what way do we go?" (Laughter) That woman looked at him, like are you

535 nuts! I laughed my ass off, but that's the fun of running with someone. The practice runs

536 were fun.

537 Tim: Thanks for everything!

538