

Are You Ready For The Darkness?
Maybe It's Just Six Steps Away..

Welcome to the winter months in little ole Britain and 2008 is starting to ebb away. The clocks have gone back, it really is dark in the evenings, and the 2009 is here. It's just you and those closest to you doing your thing, and there's definitely a distinct lack of bright lights!

Here's the crux at this time of year as I see it:

' You can map out a fight plan or a life plan, but when the action starts it may not go the way you planned, and you're down to your reflexes - which means your training. That's where your roadwork shows. If you've cheated on that in the dark of the morning - well, you're going to get found out now under the bright lights.'

Joe Frazier, Boxing.

Here then, dear reader, amidst the winter weather is where the action starts and the foundations for the next performance are laid. Maybe it wont hurt to drift into the new year. Maybe it wont hurt to skip reflecting with purpose on the last 12 months. Maybe it wont hurt to ignore setting clear, specific goals for 2009. Maybe...

Here's what I think: it will matter if you want it to. It matters to make good on a commitment - and making good on a commitment *at whatever level* is a pretty cool thing to do. I find that people who make good on commitments generally have a little more *sparkle* about them - 'cos it feels good to *do commitment*. And that's pretty good to be around as well.

'Most athletes have the will to win, but very few have the will to prepare.'

Source: unknown.

Here's what Lance has to say on the subject:

'It's a mixture of talent and hard work. Am I riding my bike on Christmas and New Years Day? Absolutely. Six weeks before the Tour de France am I 10 kilos overweight? No way. There's no mystery. It's a 365 day-a-year programme: complete commitment and hard work.'

Lance Armstrong after Tour de France win number six 2004.

Now I'm not suggesting we all spend 6 hours in the hills every day: this stuff is all relative. But there are lessons here if we want to learn them, and much more than that as well: there's a way to make this all come a little easier.

So take a moment here to consider what Big & Scary challenges you have in front of you right- or you know will be peeking over the horizon at you in the near future. These are the sort which will take you out of your comfort zone if you choose to face them..

So here's the good news: What I have learned about *Doing Big & Scary!* stuff is this: It can all come down to a Six Step process.

Step One: Set Goals To Really Grab You.

That's right: REALLY grab you and shake you and make you tingle in places you shouldn't. And you have to want to - really, really want to! But here's what I hear from many folks when I ask them about GOALS:

'Erm, something you do at the start of the year or during an appraisal at work - but my boss usually does those for me - and, oh yeah, it's a good idea to make 'em S.M.A.R.T?'

Hmm. Not really.

Here's what I'm really after: When you see them written down - because you have to write them down because *when you write stuff down it becomes real* - and you contemplate working towards them and achieving them, does it make you smile?

Because it should. If it doesn't - wrong goal. The feeling should be like waiting to go to a great movie: you can't wait to go 'cos it'll be soooooo good!

Write It Down & Make It Real

One of the great things about keeping a Diary or Journal is that nothing gets forgotten - it's all still staring back at you from the page.

Want to know at least some of why you had such a good month in June? How you prepared, what you ate and drank, how you slept, what you thought about, what you believed about yourself, what was going on at work and with the family, who you hung around with - if these things are all recorded they will be there: Clues to at least part of your success formula.

You could do a lot worse than simply building on this for next time.

Keep It In Your Daily Headlines

It's the same with GOALS: *write them down so they become real* - then put 'em all over the place! Post-it's in the bathroom, in your diary, by the phone, on your screen saver, on the visor in the car - so that you are reminded about WHAT and WHY you are doing this thing many times during a typical day.

It keeps you on track and focused: it gives your lifestyle choices MEANING & PURPOSE. And it doesn't just have to be words either: pictures and photos are all good so cut 'em out and use 'em! Is what you're doing RIGHT NOW *helpful or unhelpful* in terms of your Goal? If not, *change the choice!*

Journey & Outcome Goals

Hang on a minute. It's not all about 'The Finish' - that's just part of the equation. You're in this for keeps, right? So I assume that this is not a get-it-at-all-costs gig? Not all about the *Outcome*? Will it be the same great movie if you achieve but have walked all over people to get there - or cheated on yourself? 'Thought not.

Having some Goals for the *Journey* will help with balance and perspective. This is the HOW of it all, and that really means your personal values - stuff which you miss when it's not there.

So write these down as well.

Act As If...

This crucial step is often missed.

Even if you are relishing the prospect of sometime in the future, it's important that you START NOW! Act as if you are already there...

Prepare as you would prepare, think as you would think, dress as you would dress, believe as you would believe, talk as if you would talk...as if you had already achieved what you had set out to do.

Do Something - But Do it Differently

Unless we change our approach periodically we will tend to get the same results we always have. So even taking one different idea from all these above, the odds are you'll get some different results.

And that - I think - is part of what makes life so interesting.

Enjoy the Journey!

Next Issue: We continue the Six Step process.

Who Is Andy Mouncey?

Andy lives with his family outside Lancaster and for the last 8 years has run his own Performance Coaching business www.doingbigandscary.com

Andy supports Marc and the Endurance Coach team in helping runners prepare for ultra-marathons and the Lakeland 100 in particular.

He specialises in helping athletes train their brain and harness their emotions so that they run their race - as opposed to the race running them!

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