



We have all spoken or heard the quote “Comparison is the thief of joy.” Comparison starts at an early age. As a child, we discover quickly that some kids have nicer toys, different clothes, are shorter/taller or have different color/texture of hair. As teenagers, the comparing often intensifies and can turn into negative self-talk which may continue into adulthood.

It is very easy to get caught up in the comparison trap as a runner. We live in an age where athletes can choose to be very connected through platforms such as Garmin Connect, Strava and many other fitness apps. Race results are posted online for the world to see. Most of us have become caught up in comparing ourselves to other runners at some point. It can be really difficult NOT to think about what other people are doing and this can impact our running experience. Having said that, there are things we can do to help us focus on our own path.

PEOPLE ARE GIFTED AT DIFFERENT THINGS.

Find YOUR running strength. It may be a physical attribute like speed or endurance. It could be that you have a great ability to suffer and your mental game is top notch. It could also be something completely different like how you inspire others to be active by sharing the joy you have for running. We all have different lives, different challenges and different accomplishments. If you're interested in seeing an example of this, participate in an organized race or go to a cross country meet. You will witness the camaraderie and support for each participant~fast, slow, short, tall, old and young!

KEEP IT ALL IN PERSPECTIVE.

You're working to be YOUR best. Ask yourself these type of questions:

- ~Am I seeing progress in the areas that I am focusing on?
- ~Is a tough route that I have been running becoming easier?
- ~Can I hold this pace for a longer period of time?
- ~How did I feel at the end of this run?
- ~How have my sleep, nutrition and stress levels been this week? How has that impacted my training?

It is also helpful to keep a log so you can reflect on your journey. This can be as complicated as an online app or as simple as writing things out in a notebook.

When comparing yourself to other runners, include all those people who aren't doing anything to improve their fitness. Where do you fall when you expand to that range? No matter what your pace, you're still lapping everyone on the couch!

CONGRATULATE OTHERS ON THEIR SUCCESSES.

How do you feel about others accomplishments? Feeling happy for the success of others can help you feel happy and excited about your own progress. It also creates an atmosphere for others to be willing to celebrate YOUR successes. We can absolutely learn from each others accomplishments. Use the success of others as an inspiration!

FOCUS ON YOUR “WHY”.

A clear sense of purpose enables you to focus your efforts regardless of what others are doing. Each person has different goals and pursuits. The runner who is aiming to improve their fitness so they can play more minutes in adult league basketball is not going to be training in the same manner as the runner who is pursuing a Boston Marathon qualifying time, and should certainly NOT be expecting the same outcomes. Different “why”. Different goal. Different outcome.

At the end of the day, it really shouldn't matter what anyone else is doing. You work, you improve, you look at your training log and see how far you've come and smile about the potential of how much more you CAN do. Ideally you have an opportunity to reflect and see that you've achieved more than you thought you could.

Happy Running!

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