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Healthy Running

The Five Keys to Running Your Best Race

By **Liz Stubbs**

I'm a marathoner. I've trained for five and completed three, along with several half marathons in-between. Each race has been a journey with no guaranteed outcome. I trained for two that I wasn't able to run because of injury and a surgery that couldn't be delayed. My first marathon, the *New York City Marathon* in 2005, I ran in 4:45, which was slower than I wanted; but I was injured and, frankly, finishing was a win. However, even as I tick up in age, each subsequent marathon has been a PR, with my most recent finish at 3:56.

Want to know what one of the biggest tools in my training bag has been? Values. Yep, right along with extra sleep, rigorously good nutrition, potent yoga, periodic sports massage, proper footwear, good podcasts and running mileage, are values.

My PRs came from incorporating certain values in my training plan. No matter what training program works best for you - I swear by the Hanson plan of moderate and consistent running - there are five keys to success in optimizing running performance and enjoyment. The best news is:

- they are free,
- they work with any training program that fits your running needs and goals
- you can start practicing them on your own right away
- they work for a lifetime of great running, through all your changing abilities and

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goals

The five keys to running your best race are:

- Self-Respect
- Happiness
- Love
- Accountability,
- Gratitude.

These five values, when consciously implemented in our everyday lives and runs, have powerful effects. When we mindfully practice each of these, which I collectively call the Five-to-Be-Alive, they optimize our performance.

Our foundation for success is **self-respect**. When we practice self-respect we insist upon what is best for us. The alternative is no longer a tempting option. I want to keep improving. For me, running is my sport of choice, and I aim to be a healthy, consistent runner for decades to come, with PRs yet to achieve.

Happiness is such a direct values guide. When we know we are taking good care of ourselves, we feel physically, emotionally and mentally happier. I'm happiest in the running groove, when my daily and weekly patterns are tuned to my training rhythm. I'd also venture to say the people in my life are happier with a happier me.

The power of **love** is profound and simple. When we practice love - of ourselves, our loved ones and our life - we can achieve not only our goals, but our dreams. I love me, so I do what I need to do to keep my body and soul in a healthy balance. I love the people dear to me, and I run to keep me in the best mental, emotional and physical shape, so that I can bring the best of me to those relationships.

Of course, we must practice **accountability** to keep us on track with our goals and training. If I put in the miles and the training, it shows. If I don't, it shows.

And lastly, when we are conscious about how many opportunities we experience in one day to feel **gratitude**, we are fueled by a potently positive power. Gratitude is something I practice with every step I run. Particularly because I've been sidelined with injuries, I am acutely grateful for having the health and strength to run. I don't take that capability for granted. Running and reaching the finish line are huge accomplishments in themselves; but I find the entire experience exponentially more meaningful because I dedicate each marathon as a charity fundraiser for someone dear to me who lost their health. I am grateful to be able to run for those who can't.

The hundreds of miles I log training for each race are necessary to make it the finish line.

But the values I train with are just as necessary to make that journey.

There are a myriad of factors that play into the experience we have training and racing.

But by adding a focus on values to our running rituals and journeys, there is no room for the old habits that might sap our commitment to running better and happier. There is no room for doubt, fear, frustration, inertia - all enemies to reaching our goals and being the best runners we can be.

Liz Stubbs is an author, photographer, producer and marathoner. For more, please visit <http://www.lizstubbs.com/> and <http://www.thevaluesgals.com/>.

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CAVE SPRING ROAD RACE

5k RUN - 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk

Continental Breakfast to Follow

SATURDAY -- JUNE 12, 2010



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S.W.A.T. TEAM 18TH ANNUAL

5K "S.W.A.T. TROT"

SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 2010

7:30 P. M. - 1K FUN RUN 8:00 P. M. - 5K
EVENING RACE!!!

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