

Nate Webber

What Running Means to Me

Some may refer to it as meditation. Some may call it a coping mechanism. What I call it is a tool and a life skill. It helps me to balance the disharmony that my hectic lifestyle presents me. For me, running is a tool that is always available, helping to simplify my thoughts, ease my stress, as well as experience and enjoy new environments. Running is a life skill that I will continue to utilize throughout my life to help me accomplish all of these tasks.

I feel grateful that I have developed into a distance runner. This has allowed me to experience all that running has to offer. It has allowed me to feel the rhythm of my pace, the smoothness of my breath, and the emptying out of all the stress that has collected in my body throughout the day. I find that if I have time off from running, I experience agitation, restlessness as well as disturbed sleep. For these reasons alone, I feel that running will always be a tool in my life to regulate and balance my body.

Running in a race environment feeds my soul in an entirely different fashion. It nurtures the competitive and strategic piece of me better than almost anything. I have a love for statistics, so reading about my competitors and strategizing about my upcoming races balances out my love for competition. I use creative visualization while on my practice run of the course. I imagine who I will need to be running with, who needs to be behind me, and of course, when I need to kick! All of this plotting nourishes my need to do better as a runner.

Running also helps me achieve a balance as a social being. It provides me with a collection of people who I know share a similar mentality with me. Doing this sport guarantees that I will meet and befriend a group of people that I know I can find something in common with, both in the present and in the future. I feel that runners, for the most part, share many common traits. Carefully monitored nutrition, our relentless need for regimen and exercise, and our need to surround ourselves with a group of people that support us in our life in and outside of running are just a few of these common traits. I know that running always assures a great support system for myself and all others who choose to take part in it.

One other important task that running accomplishes is the one that I believe is the most important of all. Running teaches many life lessons along with feeding the competitive nature of myself and others. The best thing that running has shown me is that many of the best people you will ever meet are people that do this sport. The year before I attended my current school, the former track and cross country coach of the school died. His name was Peter O'Sullivan. His death affected so many people not just at my school, but throughout the entire Merrimack Valley region. This showed me how much of an impact one person can have on many others. This man accomplished this task through sports and in the classroom at my current school and because I do this sport, I now feel that it is my obligation to do the same.

I feel that running will provides me with balance not just for my body, but for myself as a person as well. It will allow me to enjoy my love for food so much more! I know that as I continue this way of life, I will be able to counterbalance my calorie intake with a good distance run. Running is a tool that is always available to me unlike a gym. It is convenient in that it is as close as my nearest training shoes! All of these truths about running are why I have chosen it as a way of life. It provides balance for me in my mind, body and spirit.