

AVON LAKE CROSS COUNTRY'S

"Meet Cheat Sheet"

Wadsworth
Saturday 9.14.13

DON'T RUN WITH YOUR LEGS RUN WITH YOUR HEART

Coach (after race): How do you feel?

Dean Karnazes: I feel good.

Coach: If it felt **good**, you didn't push yourself hard enough. It's supposed to hurt like ****.

Do you know the feeling you get in a race, the feeling of exhaustion that you experience, the feeling your lungs get (almost a burning feeling) when you're breathing hard, the place your mind goes to when you're in pain, the feeling your arms get when they get really tired pumping, the feeling your knees get when they aren't in command of each stride length as effortlessly as they were at the beginning of the race...do you know that feeling?

Sure you do. That's the time your mind starts battling with itself. It starts justifying not doing your best. It asks you to please stop doing this running thing, this thing which is hurting your body and, logically—as the brain tends to be—pleads with you to not push the body too much, just settle in and deal with **this** level of pain but no more. I mean, after all, a bunch of my friends aren't out here, early on a Saturday morning, running through a grueling 2-mile race. In fact, there are a lot of people not nearly as disciplined, motivated, or hard-working as I am...relatively-speaking, I'm super awesome! I can afford to finish this race at this current pace, I'm tired enough, I've done enough, I'm good.

You ever get that feeling? Sure you do. We all get that feeling! And, you know what: I actually love getting that feeling. You know why? Because, I love thinking those thoughts, feeling those feelings, and, almost, for just a moment, **embracing** those feelings. Then, once I do, once I'm about to relent, give up just a little bit, and justify to myself that it's all right **not** to do my best because I've already given enough, a small, countering voice in my head, very distant, not very loud, definitely not very sane, tells me to push past those feelings. It tells me to forget about the pain, to forget about how I feel **now**, and poses a simple question: what if I could push a little farther? What if I tried pushing just a little further past the level of pain I'm in now? And, what if I get there and realize that it's not as bad as I thought? Could I push a little further beyond **that**?

And beyond that, what if I realized that my **fear** of the pain was actually greater than the pain itself? So...if I push past the pain, and then realize it's possible, then the only thing to fear is the fear of the pain itself? In short, I love getting those self-defeatist thoughts because I love pushing them back, stomping them into submission, and going past that point I thought I'd never dare to go. It's such a great feeling of accomplishment.

That's a feeling that I truly hope you get at some point this season. It's the best. It cannot really be described. But what we're really talking about here is **fear**. I remember one night I went out on a solo 10-mile run and I got to a point in the run where I realized that, earlier in my training, I used to be fearful of going out at the speed I was going out in...but at that particular night I wasn't. I realized that I got to a point where I had taken ownership of my pain (yes, I actually thought those exact words). I thought, "I'm not afraid of the pain

anymore. This is my pain. I earned it.” That’s exactly what I thought at the time. I always remember that particular run (it was in North Carolina...I was doing a road run at night while visiting a relative in the hospital), because it was then that I realized that it was possible to actually embrace pain, almost like a symbol of the hard work I’d put in. Once that happened, I didn’t have the fear anymore. I had no limits. While I initially thought I feared the pain, I now know I was simply fearing the unknown limits of my own potential—I feared what it might feel like to push myself. But, once I did it, the fear took a backseat to my own goals and my own sense of accomplishment. It’s hard to fear pain when you own it! It’s hard to fear the unknown once you make it known.

Your goal is to put yourself in a position where you’re conquering your fear. Fear of pain, fear of failure, fear of the unknown. You’ll find that once you get to that point where you push past all those logical points your brain makes about not doing your best, about simply doing *really* good (but not your best), you’ll begin craving those moments that allow you to challenge yourself! And a lifetime of challenging yourself (versus one of playing it safe) is another lesson this sport can give you.

“Team Racing Goals”

1. Front Run!

Time to get out front and see what you’re made of. If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten. It’s time to go out and get something *more*. Time to push. Not just to beat another team, but to conquer your fear, to be brave and try something you’ve never tried before, and to learn how to compete against the best. Brecksville’s the best. Can you beat the best?

2. Reflect on our racing.

Talk to each other about our racing! You need to alleviate fear and open up possibilities by communicating with each other! Have fun, joke around, but let’s also focus on what it means to be a competitive runner.

3. Goal setting.

All runners need goals. What are yours? Are you achieving them? Writing down our goals as we reflect on our season and our racing is huge. Putting thoughts down on paper help commit a person to following through on his or her goals.

“Reminders from the last 4 weeks”

- **Get a good start, practice good form, and finish through the chute!**
- **Pack running is good, as long as you talk to each other to let each other know how you feel!**
- **Surge!**
- **Stretch**
- **Stay positive in all thoughts and actions—keep this up!**

“Keep our SEASON GOALS in mind”

#1 Promote a healthy lifestyle

Healthy diet, healthy choices, positive outlook

#2 Ownership

Take care of myself, my team, and let my team take care of me

#3 Collective Responsibility

Two are better than one when two can act as one