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Management is a Marathon

Practical advice on overcoming obstacles, working effectively, pacing yourself and, always, moving forward, even when you hit that wall at Mile 20.

If you run, you're a runner

Get past imposter syndrome. You deserve the position and the chance. Now, just because you're a runner doesn't mean you have perfected the form, or the technique. Likewise as a manager – it'll come with challenges. Experience and training will make it better.

Always have a plan

Building up for a marathon requires a roadmap, realistic and thoughtful strategy. Avoid running a lot of "junk miles." Each run in a plan has a purpose – speed, endurance, stamina, shakeout.

But be willing to vary it

Adapt to the circumstances, do what works best for you – and your team – at the time. You can always recalibrate a plan. Listen to your body. That is, know when you are pushing it to hard, or if something feels not right.

Sometimes you have to single-task it

Management can involve a million things at once. Sometimes you have to lock in, and do one thing – and not try to do all of them at once. In other words, just run.

Just get started

The first mile is always the hardest. At least for me. Relate this to bureaucratic work, or difficult conversations ... you may hate the idea of doing it, but you'll be glad that you did.

Run the mile you're in

Focus on the here and now. Be present. Don't rehash the past, or worry excessively about the future.

You have to put in the work

Day to day to day, you have to put in the miles, the workouts, the exercises. In management, this can mean all of the little things. There is no shortcut to success.

Set a big goal (but have backups)

What are your A, B and C goals. If things start to go wrong, what is a fallback?

Slow progress is still progress

Things may go bad, and not exactly how you envisioned. It's inevitable. Sometimes just moving forward is a victory

Even effort

This is different than even pace, when you have hills, ups and downs, wind, rain, outside forces ... you can always control your effort – and attitude – can't always control outside factors.

Sometimes you get redflagged

Sometimes things are out of your control, such as crazy weather and redflagged Chicago Marathon ... adapt, don't blame yourself. Do the best you can with what you have.

There's always a next race

If something doesn't work, evaluate what happened, try again.

Race against yourself

Measure against yourself and your own progress Not others. Are you getting better? Is your form stronger? Fueling better? Making fewer mistakes?

Resting is part of the training

You need to avoid burnout ... resting doesn't mean nothing is happening. You can rejuvenate muscles or, in this scenario, allow others to step up and grow.

You can't run in your office

Get out into the newsroom, and out in the community, seeing different things. We vary our routes, not the same old thing day after day.

Find your crew

Who are your running peers, who are your pacers, who can you help up their game? It may be people in this group – a support system, role models.

You don't get there on your own

Running may seem solitary, but it's a group effort – training, support, sacrifices, etc.

The marathon doesn't owe you anything

Stay humble. Or you will be humbled. You can put in all of the work, and things may still break down. Don't be cocky or over confident. Calf camps can strike at the 26 mile marker.

