

January 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 NEW YEAR'S DAY
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 NEW YEAR'S EVE
9 BOXING DAY	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 BOXING DAY	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 CHRISTMAS DAY	24 ST. STEPHEN'S DAY	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

"Be willing to be a beginner every single morning."

—Mats Wilander



SPEAK

The next time running comes up in conversation, listen to how you talk about it. Poetic or technical, adjectives or verbs, language captures only part of the experience and almost never the personal part. Likely, words aren't what fail you. Most runners speak about goals or achievements instead of purpose, as if what could explain why. To get more from your workouts this year, flip the conversation. Listen to what running says about you.

That you look at all proves you believe personal change is possible and that you have some control over its direction. When you were new to running, this required a leap of faith. Does this gutiness show up in other parts of your life—say, your ease at taking on a large home-improvement project or your instincts for striking up a conversation with an attractive stranger? When psychological risk fades from a training program, progress is doomed. Find ways to dare yourself, even in the smallest, daily decisions, then watch how this habit of mind helps you get more from your workouts.

Running doesn't necessarily signal that you're an insatiably rigid, detail freak, but it hints that you prefer order over chaos. After all, a training program is basically just organized effort, the more organized, the better the results. Just make sure consistency doesn't turn you into a monster. If you're horrified when a work colleague asks to accompany you on a run or enraged when a bad closure forces you to an unfamiliar route, your workouts might need fresh

perspective (or your diet needs more fiber). Mental flexibility isn't just an accommodation to the messy demands of daily living; it makes you a better runner, forcing you to re-sort priorities on the fly, broaden goals, reimagine payoffs, and enjoy the ride. A workout canceled because of a lightning storm can be downright therapeutic.

Runners have a peculiar, sometimes fetishistic relationship with numbers. Whatever your goals, numbers are short answers to the long question posed by dedicated exertion, whether they tick from a stopwatch or glare at you from a bathroom scale. You can't argue with them. Remind yourself that the runner, not the number, is the sheriff of your training program; if the level of effort feels right and your commitment to training is both reasonable and satisfying, disappointing tallies suggest your goals are off. Go find some new numbers.

Even your running form reveals your essential character. You can need focus and intent from hips and arms swing. Feet stamping the ground indicate that fatigue is pushing in. Are you the kind of person who denies the pain or wears it with defiance? As in life, fears can mean anything, though they're sometimes accompanied by a humble sadness that yawns across the face when a victory is nigh. And there is nothing more evocative and personally revealing than the last few strides of a runner who has spent absolutely everything within. It's a great reminder that talk is cheap. ■