



November 2015

EMPOWERING TIMES



THINKING ALOUD

Joy of Running - Rohan Shahane



PODIUM

Interview with Rahul Verghese - Founder and CEO, Running And Living Infotainment



WE RECOMMEND

The Art of Thinking Clearly - Rolf Dobelli



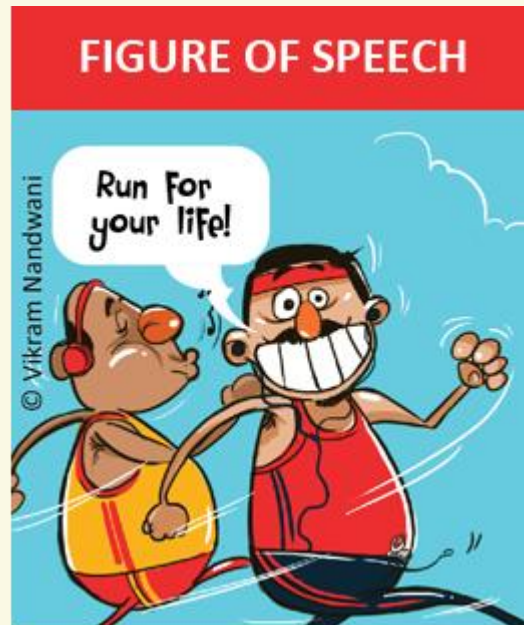
STANDING OVATION

Janmitram Kalyan Samiti, Chhattisgarh



Dear Reader,

Scene: 5 am, alarm bell rings. While most of us would hit the snooze button and tuck ourselves in bed at this unearthly hour, there are others who are awake and up and ready to run that extra mile. What motivates people to run? A plethora of scientific research continues to refresh the idea that running has its own benefits. Running has obvious health and fitness benefits, but more importantly, boosts self-confidence and helps unleash one's potential by breaking self-created barriers. To some, running feeds their bodies, minds and souls. To others, no matter how slow or fast, crossing the finish line is memorable. On a more spiritual level, running makes one humble, patient and kind.



In an interview, Anil Ambani walks down memory lane about his passion for running. A question of his weight at an investor conference in New York did not weigh him down. Instead after this, he first trained himself for the Boston Marathon in 2003 and today he is a serial marathon runner. Today, he clocks in 100 kms a week, while the rest of the city sleeps. He goes on to quote that running is at a deeper level, about pushing limits, and realizing one's capabilities. The importance of running was also highlighted after he said that it helped him head one of the world's largest conglomerates.

An emerging trend is the large number of corporations that are encouraging employees to participate in city marathons. Corporate Wellness programmes is a favourite with many firms today and one of the popular initiatives is sponsorship and participation in marathons. The benefits to the firm include brand building and a vivid display of team building (picture a large number of employees dressed in corporate colours, waving the company flag, running joyfully across miles in a group), apart from the benefit for individual employees (health, fun, fitness, etc.). For instance, over 400 employees of Sigma Electric had participated in the Pune marathon for a few years creating excitement across the firm, leading to similar runs in other locations of the firm.

In fact, apart from golf, the new mantra of corporate leaders is running marathons across the globe (case in point, N. Chandrasekhar of TCS, Rashesh Shah of Edelweiss, to name a few). In fact, TCS has become a sponsor of the New York Marathon as part of its global brand building efforts.

Media heralds various marathons the world over, even at the North Pole! To inculcate the spirit of running, campaigners theme their marathons to welcome many to start running. For example, the Pinkathon is a unique initiative that encourages women to stay fit by promoting simple activities like walking and running and at the same time it raises the awareness of breast cancer. In another example, to add a touch of culture, a local association of runners organized a marathon earlier during the month, wherein the participants had to complete a 5 km run in any ethnic wear of their choice, so as to advocate good health and celebrate the festival of Diwali.

ET this month throws light on the subject - "the Joy of Running." Why wait any longer to attain the benefits of running. Get up and get running!

In the **Thinking Aloud** section, avid runner, Rohan Shahane highlights the importance of running which is a natural instinct of humans since evolution. There is more to running than what the eye can see and perhaps, comprehend. The reasons as to why people run are many and this trend is gaining popularity day by day.

On the **Podium**, Mr. Rahul Verghese - Founder and CEO of Running And Living Infotainment tells readers that at the start, pursuing sports (running) can be a herculean task. But the key here is to enjoy it. Mr. Verghese highlights the importance of distance running and talks about his movement 'Running And Living' and its positive impact on individuals and corporates.

In **We Recommend**, Meeta Lee reviews Rolf Dobelli's book - The Art of Thinking Clearly. The book is an analysis of 99 mental biases, common errors of judgments and how to avoid the same in our day to day thinking. Each of these biases (fallacies) is explained in brief, coupled with examples and anecdotes, to end with the author's final advice.

In **Standing Ovation**, we highlight the noble work undertaken by Chhattisgarh based NGO, Janmitram Kalyan Samiti (Janmitram). Sustainable livelihood and poverty elimination is at the core of their endeavours since their inception in 2000.

In **Figures of Speech**, Vikram's toon hopes to encourage you to run!

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply **Click Here**. You can also follow us on **Facebook, Twitter, Linked In & Google+** - where you can join our community to continue the dialogue with us!

THINKING ALOUD

Joy of Running - Rohan Shahane

"The best runner leaves no tracks" ~ Tao Te Ching

Motion is central to the evolutionary process. Evolutionary history tells us that one of the most natural instincts of humans is running - be it for survival (self-preservation), hunting for food/shelter or simply for recreation.

In a 2007 paper in the journal Sports Medicine, Daniel E. Lieberman, a Harvard evolutionary Biologist, and Dennis M. Bramble, a Biologist at the University of Utah, wrote that several characteristics unique to humans suggested that endurance running played an important role in our evolution. Their paper mentions - 'Humans have exceptional capabilities to run long distances in hot, arid conditions. These abilities, unique among primates and rare among mammals, derive from a suite of specialised features that permit running humans to store and release energy effectively in the lower limb, help keep the body's centre of mass stable and overcome the thermoregulatory challenges of long distance running. Human endurance running performance capabilities compare favourably with those of other mammals and probably emerged sometime around 2 million years ago in order to help meat-eating hominids compete with other carnivores.' So, for those who believe they are not made for running (keeping the 'interest' factor aside), hope this settles the matter for good.

But really, it is not just about running long distances, racing marathons or being able to endure long spells of extreme discomfort - physical/mental to experience a runner's high. Fortunately, there is much more to draw from, for all types of runners. As they say in running - 'you get out what you put in' and 'the longest distance one really runs lies between their two ears'.

Try this - the next time you meet someone who is into running (distance, pace or their running achievements do not matter here), just ask them why they run or even what they think about while running? Your query is likely to generate a plethora of responses as diverse as - 'finding answers to a deep spiritual quest' to 'it is meditation in motion' to 'fitting back into a pair of jeans I got for my x birthday!' It is interesting how people relate with running and what they seek from it. It often seems to be both, therapeutic and cathartic for a lot of runners. You will notice they punctuate their circumstance, consciously or unconsciously, and draw from this reservoir to provide meaning and purpose to their everyday existence.

Whatever be the motivation, running is surely gaining popularity by the day. More and more people across age bands can be seen pounding the streets and trails to achieve their PR/PB (Personal Record/Personal Best). Here in India, we are blessed to have a topography that allows all kinds of terrain and temperatures (high, low, flat,

hilly, dry, cold, hot, wet, desert, forest, etc.) to run in, and depending on the season, organizers carefully select the course and category to satiate the runners' desire to 'try something different' and experience a new 'runner's high' - by day or night!

Nowadays, it is easy to find a running club in one's neighbourhood or a marathon event in one's city. In fact, there are scheduling challenges as the prime weekends are mostly taken up and people are spoilt for choice. Registrations for most of the marquee events close-out well before the last date and organizers keep dropping the qualifying timing (eligibility for registration) to manage big numbers.

This steady growth in events and participant numbers has resulted in the spawning of many allied businesses and services. In fact, a whole new category has emerged focused on the 'running industry' (running gear, nutrition, coaching, training equipment, physiotherapy, medical assistance, event management, etc.) and promises to grow exponentially as more people continue to lace-up.

Ultimately, for a runner, it is discovering the sheer joy of floating on one's feet and foxtrotting on the beats of a joyful heart!

"A million miles our vagabond heels; clocked up beneath the clouds...
This is my fife; this is my drum; so you never will hear me complain..."

If these haunting lines from the Mark Knopfler & Emmylou Harris classic - 'All The Roadrunning' resonate with you, it is likely you have discovered the joy of running already!

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PODIUM

Interview with Rahul Verghese - Founder and CEO, Running And Living Infotainment



Mr. Rahul Verghese

Mr. Rahul Verghese is an innovative marketing professional, with 33 years of varied experience of starting or turning around businesses post IIM Ahmedabad. His jobs have spanned national, regional and global roles at Unilever, Nestle, a garment firm and Motorola in India, Singapore and the US before starting his own marketing venture 8 years ago.

Mr. Verghese got into running by accident while posted in Chicago with Motorola over his first winter there in 2000 and ran his first ever marathon in Chicago in 2001. He has run 52 marathons across 6 continents including an 89 km Comrades in South Africa. His 50th marathon was the Everest Base Camp Marathon in May 2014. He plans to run an Antarctic marathon in November, 2016 and is seeking a sponsor to see how they can leverage this in their business.

He started Running And Living Infotainment Pvt Ltd as an entrepreneur with the goal of getting 200 million people running, and building running into a brand activation platform for marketers to leverage strategically. This was the fusion of his marketing experience and the feel good and social benefits of running he had experienced and then researched. Running And Living works with brands and companies and combines some runs around an activity such as road cleaning, sapling plantation, or a focus around health and running - blood sugar, the heart, etc. building in employee engagement where required.

Mr. Verghese is a prolific writer on the subject of running. His articles and running related content reaches over 3 million households through print, TV and radio. Running And Living has had over 150,000 participants in their 150+ runs across 10 states of the country, with 75+ running groups. Running And Living also works with Governments on the importance of running and promoting it at the grass roots, as well as doing talks at schools and colleges on how sports shape character as well as working with corporates in the areas of leadership development, team building and productivity enhancement. He has just written a book - Running And Living available on Amazon and Flipkart. Running And Living Infotainment has been featured on the cover of the WEEK, on NDTV and other national media over the years.

ET: What mantras would you share for people who find it hard to get started and even harder to stay consistent with running/chosen sport?

RV: People get into running or a sport for a spectrum of different reasons, ranging from health issues, to it being fun, social, or being their profession or business. Focusing on the 'non-business/profession' motivations, and sticking to the personal, I would say that the key thing in any sport including running, is that you should enjoy it, and be having fun.

Starting off is always the biggest challenge because instead of learning from the better sportspersons around you, you could get over awed by their proficiency. In the case of running, the key is to make a start, and perhaps team up with a friend or neighbour in a nearby park. Perhaps run and walk with music, perhaps listen to the birds chirping in the early morning, look at others around you as they walk and run and say to yourself - if they can, so can I!

We must also remember that the 1st 2-3 weeks are going to be the toughest and perhaps, keep two things at the back of your mind - focus on each week and see how much better you are doing and feeling, and also if you want to have an audacious goal in mind, sign up for a 5 km run to keep you focused and motivated, and then follow a training program (and there are lots of them on the internet) to keep progressing injury free and make sure you enjoy running more and more, as you get better.

ET: How do you see distance running influencing one's life in general/career in specific?

RV: Some of the benefits of distance running include:

- Distance running is a great teacher in life.
- It builds self-confidence and optimism.
- Distance running gets us to experience the runners high and puts us into a positive frame of mind so that we begin to focus on solutions rather than the obstacles themselves.
- It teaches humility.
- You get back what you put into it.
- Reminds you that you are unlikely to continuously get better by doing more of the same, but you need to get smarter by training smarter.
- Huge tasks are like a marathon, break it into parts, train and plan well, keep cheering your progress and focus on the end goal, nothing is then impossible - tough, yes!
- It's a great way to building relationships - within families, forging new friendships, and strengthen bonds within and across teams.
- Running builds perseverance and self-confidence, which are both required in good measure in our careers, as it enables a 'can do' attitude.

And I could go on and on.

ET: How did you come about starting a movement such as 'Running And Living'?

RV: I got into running myself quite by accident while posted in Chicago with Motorola, and then after my 1st marathon there at 41, got into running around the world with my extensive work and leisure travel. I would chat with people from all

sorts of backgrounds and with varied motivations to run, when I ran these marathons in different places, and was amazed by what running had done for them. I then started looking within and found that I was ever more positive, self-confident, fitter than when I was in college, and also much more humble.

When we got back to India in 2003, I found not a single store or any resource of any value for someone who wanted to start running in India. A few years later, I started writing on running and also set up a website, <https://runningandliving.com>, and then was overwhelmed when I would receive e-mails from people telling me about how 'I had changed their life'. That gave me goosebumps and got me thinking once again and I decided to switch gears and try and fuse my 25 years of marketing experience across diverse industries and geographies, with my 7 year old passion for running and set up an entrepreneurial venture. Running And Living is a marketing venture focused around using running as a platform to engage consumers with brands in a fun and memorable way. We also try and get people closer to the environment, as we run on beaches, in forests, in the upper Himalayas, and on the Formula one Race Track and other offbeat locations. We now do 20 runs a year, have a vibrant social community, with our content on running reaching out to a few million households, periodically. We now have around 60+ running groups across the country and our goal is to increase that to 1,000 so that no matter where you are located, you would have someone close by with you - physically or virtually. Our goal is to inspire 200 million people to start running.

ET: Tell us how Running And Living's various programmes are benefitting the corporate world?

RV: Running And Living is a marketing platform for both internal and external connects for a corporate or for a brand.

We try to get a company to get in their employees, suppliers and customers and other stakeholders to come and participate as a team, and get engaged together in our small and cosy runs which have 200-1,500 participants - never more than that.

If they come on board as a lead brand engaged with the event, then we get the brand to be up front and centre of the whole experience, apart from getting their stakeholders and brand ambassadors, etc. to participate and some employees to give out medals, and certificates at the finish line. That's a good way for the whole ecosystem of a brand to be engaged as one. The brand also gets a 2-4 month window to engage with the target audience through our facebook communities at <https://www.facebook.com/RunningAndLiving> and at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/48840145643/>, our e-newsletter to an active lifestyle audience, and our website, while they leverage their reach through the traditional media via their communications team.

We also do workshops for corporates on putting some more passion into life, team building and leadership - with running as the intervention medium, and try to make it measurable.

So the benefits range across:

- Team building.
- Innovatively connecting with influential target consumers with a 2-4 month window of communication.
- Getting the brand centre stage within the running experience and being remembered.
- Leveraging PR with business magazines and papers on innovative marketing.
- Getting a 360 engagement for the organization.
- Social and digital media engagement and involvement.
- Rolling this out to multiple offbeat locations, through the year.

ET: Your book - 'Running And Living' that was launched in June, 2015, is not really about becoming a great runner, instead, it talks about getting more out of one's life and achieving greater happiness! Please elaborate.

RV: As far as I know, we have only one life on this planet and we have to make it count, and live it to the fullest. One of the best ways to do that is to have a dream, unfettered and unconstrained, like that of a 5 year old, and then for us to go out and start living that dream. That gives both purpose and a meaning to our life.

Running is a great way to enable this, as it gets you on a high, gets you into a positive zone and enables you to think and dream big, unshackled by constraints.

A dream helps to keep us charged up when the chips are down, and it gets us to celebrate small victories along the way. Running does that for us as we do our 1st ever 1-2 km run and pump the air with our fist as we finish, and then go to longer distances, breaking those mental barriers one by one. Learnings from long distance running help us to stay focused and motivated, realising that there are going to be challenges and nothing is ever going to be smooth sailing all the time.

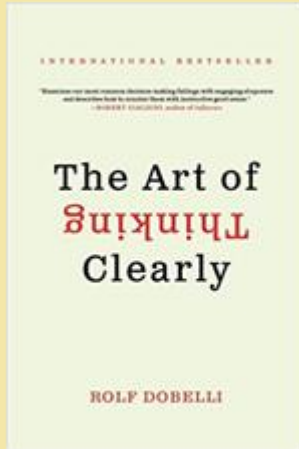
It helps us reach closer and closer to our potential within. Sometimes you can be surprised when you find where you have reached. That realization gives us a big boost within, as well as a great sense of pride. Nothing better than a positive self-charged person and a community, to help change the world for the better.

For more information on my book, please **Click Here**.

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WE RECOMMEND

The Art of Thinking Clearly - Rolf Dobelli



Did you know that professional swimmers don't have perfect bodies because they train extensively; rather they are good swimmers because of their physiques? Similarly, when you are in a group you tend to replicate the behaviour of others even though you may not feel like behaving in that particular way. Have you ever thought that why you bite more than you can chew or why does the last cookie in the jar make your mouth water?

These are a few examples of fallacies from the book, "The Art of Thinking Clearly" by Rolf Dobelli. This book highlights different kinds of errors and biases that influence our thinking ability and introduces the reader to

99 mental biases. According to Dobelli, once we are aware of these biases and errors, we will be able to spot them and avoid them so that we can think clearly and start taking better decisions and better choices - whether dealing with a personal or professional problem, understanding what we want or don't want in our lives.

The message that this book tries to convey is that don't focus on the problem, but focus on everything that is not part of the problem and keep working on it. This will help us eliminate our errors and think clearly. From why one should not accept a free drink to why one should walk out of a movie one doesn't like or why it is so hard to predict the future, The Art of Thinking Clearly is a good read which helps you understand why people are less rational.

Rolf Dobelli is a Swiss author and businessman who began his writing career in 2002. He has an MBA from the University of St. Gallen and has a PhD in Economic Philosophy. The Art of Thinking Clearly was originally published in German and was the bestselling non-fiction book in Germany and Switzerland in 2012 before it was translated into English in 2013.

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STANDING OVATION

Janmitram Kalyan Samiti (Janmitram), Chhattisgarh



Janmitram became a registered NGO in October, 2002, but began operations in the year 2000 in Chhattisgarh. This association aims at providing services to the poor, weak, and marginal sections of society including women by striving to strengthen the poor through education, training and vocational rehabilitation. This NGO initially worked for livelihood enhancement and coupled this later with natural resource management. Health and skill development programmes were also added over the years.

The social courses which the organization empathizes with include:-

- Promotion of rural livelihood and their sustainability to alleviate rural poverty.
- Skill up gradation and training to youth towards self-reliance.
- Main streaming the backward community on health, education and income generation to up the Human Development Index.
- Imparting awareness to the rural community for self-governance to strengthen the Panchayati Raj system.
- Natural resource management to sustain environment and livelihood.

Mission:

- Improving health and educational status for women and children.
- Improving economic status of ST/SC and marginal sections of the society through employment generation, skill development, and liaison for capital arrangement.
- To institutionalize services in the unorganized sector and introducing proven technologies and ideas for better living.
- Conservation and management of natural resources through people's participation.
- Strengthening community organizations, local bodies, and Panchayati Raj institutions for effective self-governance.
- Advocacy for human rights and people's initiatives for social justice.

For more information, please visit <http://www.janmitram.in>.

Janmitram deserves a Standing Ovation for their work!

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