

**YOUNG CHILD: Mom? What is... 'normal'?**

**MOM: It's just a setting on the dryer, honey.**

This motivational race sign has always made me chuckle and simultaneously wonder.

**MY EVERYDAY EXPEDITION: Running 9,004 (outdoor/off-road) miles in 2019**

I hesitated in writing this post, as it is not in my nature. My goal is to give insight and offer a little bit of **hope**.

Here's some background for context. In 9 short days I will turn 47 years old. We have four children (ages 12-17) and have been married for almost 19 yrs (although my wife jokingly says, "Its been 16 good years"). We live outside of Austin in the Texas Hill Country. I've been a practicing Occupational Therapist for 21 years (pediatrics/geriatrics) and race directing since 2006.

I've run recreationally most of my life, but started running longer distances in 2005. To be clear, I am not a fast runner, nor am I physically gifted or frankly all that bright. Like most, I'm quite flawed. I'm not retired or financially independent. I'm a middle class, middle aged family man...just an average, "normal" dad. I am, however blessed with good health and community. Lastly, I've maintained a plant-based diet since 2017 (thank you Julie Piatt and Rich Roll). This has played a significant role in reducing my daily inflammatory response and aiding in my recovery.

I started increasing my mileage in the fall of 2018, attempting to get back to basics. Things progressed organically from there. Stringing together twenty-four 100+ mile training weeks (2,501 miles), This was not premeditated, it felt just right, so I kept truckin'...one day at a time. However, as the weeks & months pasted my efforts became more intentional. I took off a week to direct the Tinajas Ultra, then attempted to run a marathon a day for 100 consecutive days. My parameters where basic, I must run at least 26.2+ outside/off-road miles (trail, practice fields, parks, etc) everyday. My time frame is 3am-3am. I've also read that if it didn't happen on Strava, then it really didn't happen. So here is a link, just in case the saying is true. <https://www.tejastrails.com/bio-resume-quinn>. At the time of this post it will be day #311 and counting.

Along the way, I've had a lot of time to reflect, experienced many highs and lows, and plenty of trial & error. Here are 5 lessons that have helped me along the way. These are my "big picture" observations. I'm not dogmatic or ideological about any of these ideas. Again, these have been beneficial to me along my journey. You may agree or disagree, but perhaps they will help you as much as they have helped me.

1. KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) - High tech gadgets/gear, complicated training plans and meticulous nutrition regiments can be overwhelming. Develop systems in your environment that nudge you towards your goals. Discipline is like a muscle and muscles fatigue. So find a comfortable pair of shoes, dress appropriately and just get outside. Don't over think it.
2. Perfection Is The Enemy of Good - Training and/or working towards a large goal is obviously challenging. Its easy to get caught up in the details and fall behind. Paralysis by analysis. Do what you can each day. Only have time for 2 miles and 5 pushups? No worries. Something is always better than nothing. Getting started can be one of our biggest obstacles.
3. Best Laid Plans Of Mice & Men - Be flexible. Did you wake up with your work and training all planned out for the day, but then found out your kiddo had a piano recital that had been scheduled for months! All good...adjust and modify. Find a way to get some of your goals accomplished (see #2). Do what you can today, move on and get ready for tomorrow. This is a marathon, not a sprint.
4. Grow Where You Are Planted - I grew up in the woods of northern Wisconsin, lived for most of my 20's in Colorado and traveled extensively. I'm thankful to live in the Hill Country, but occasionally lament and have FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) when I hear about others adventures. My wife set me straight, stating "grow where you are planted". Our lives are here in Texas right now, and that is our current reality. Take advantage of every opportunity that has been afforded you. A growth mindset is up to each of us. Be present and grateful.
5. How Do You Eat An Elephant? One Bite At A Time - The aggregation of marginal gains. It is these daily practices that add up over time. Show up, take action and get a little better (1%) everyday. Create your new "normal" and overtime you will see progress. This is a lifelong practice.

**"Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies." — Andy Dufresne**

Thank you for taking a moment to read this post. I **hope** it helps you in some small way. I'd also like to thank a few people. My trail mentors, the Prusaitis' and McWatters families, Josue Stephens, our Tejas Trails Tribe, my parents and friends, my kids and especially my beloved wife. She puts up with all my peccadilloes and supports me unconditionally. She is most definitely my better half.

A grateful runner,

Brad T. Quinn