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Inspiring Runner: Douw Prinsloo

Posted: 01 February 2016

The realisation that he needed to make a major change in his life was the guiding force that helped Douw to lose weight and start his journey along the path to running...



My journey started way back in 2009 when I woke up one morning and decided NOW is the time to take charge of my life. At that time I weighed a staggering 133kg.

I started training with a personal trainer and chose the hard way, the natural way - no shakes, no pills, no nothing - just hard work! Let me fast forward - I did my first 5kg run/walk in January 2011 and today, 6 years later, I have lost 53kgs, I have run all the distances between 5km and 90km.

I have done both Two Oceans Half and Ultra Marathons and did my back to back Comrades in 2015. I have also done two international runs, the Bangkok Marathon and recently, on 18th of October 2015 I did the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon in Canada.

My journey to Canada was about more than just myself. I supported the Steve O'Brien Foundation. There I met with the legend, himself, and also did two runs with him while he was busy with his Cross-Canada Relay for Youth. I had an opportunity to spread the love and inspiration when I was invited to be the guest speaker at a "Wild about Wellness" health and wellness networking group in Hamilton, ON.

My journey was not an easy one, I had my challenges, but I committed myself to using my life and my journey to inspire others to also live healthier and better lives; to become better versions of who they were meant to be.

This year I did the Two Oceans Ultra, but I ran it as a test run for Comrades after many months of battling with plantar fasciitis. I did not finish the Ultra in time. I came in 7 minutes after the final cut off, but this run was not in vain.

Firstly I got to help a guy make it to the end after he wanted to quit at around 12km to go. I told him quitting was no option. I told him that we were NOT going to make it in time but we were going finish this race! Maybe not in time, but we finished every single km of the 56km.

Secondly, I realised that I was able to deal with the pain; I was able to run through it and this made me more determined to line up for Comrades on 31 May 2015; and I did. Two Oceans made it clear to me that I had to change my race plan for Comrades: I was going to run a steady pace of around 8 minutes per km and continue to the end and go get that back to back medal. So I did exactly that. I crossed the finish line with three minutes to spare before the 12 hour cut off.

Mission accomplished!



After being part of the Run For Bibles project of the Bible Society of SA in 2015, I have since started my own charity drive under the banner #Run4BibleRands.

Comments On Post :

Debbie Thirion Campbell

an inspiration! I also needed to change my eating habits seriously. I weighed 114kg and at 1.57 that is like a little ball, i could not even run 50m without almost dying! I started seriously walking but then my friend got me a TomTom watch for christmas, this was in 2014. I started with my first 3 km and i was so in awe that i could actually finish it people would swear i finished the comrades! Now a year and a month later i have run numerous 10km races and the OmTom half will be my second official race, doing the Knysna Heads later in this month. I have done several 21.1km training runs just to make sure i can do it and guess what...I CAN! 35kg lighter and fit and healthy.....if we can do it so can YOU reader...like Nike says "Just do it"

Unlike · Reply · 2 · Feb 2, 2016 12:10pm

Douw Prinsloo · Nelspruit Hoërskool

Debbie, good afternoon - It was Brian Tracy who said, "Disciplining yourself to do what you know is right and important, although difficult, is the high road to pride, self-esteem and personal satisfaction." Thsi is a hard lesson to learn; we are each responsible for his / her own life. You did great so far and yes, YOU CAN ! Good luck with the rest of your journey. Live your BEST possible life !

You can find me via my web page at www.myownjourney.co.za or on Twitter @myownjourney_sa

Like · Reply · 1 · Feb 2, 2016 4:20pm

Douw Prinsloo · Nelspruit Hoërskool

You can find me via my web page at www.myownjourney.co.za or on Twitter @myownjourney_sa

Like · Reply · Feb 2, 2016 4:36pm

Karen Clouter · Richelieu Valley Regional High School

You are such an inspiration Douw. You have shown everyone that everything IS POSSIBLE. I see you go from race to race and become healthier and healthier and I'm so proud of you. I had the honor of seeing what you do first hand when you came to Canada last year. You never seemed deprived or suffering....you made choices and helped others along the way with a smile and an open heart. Wow!! Knowing you has made me a better person. Continue to show the world how easy it is to make changes...get healthy and have fun. You're amazing and I love you with all my heart!! xoxo

Unlike · Reply · 2 · Feb 2, 2016 4:41pm

Douw Prinsloo · Nelspruit Hoërskool

Thank Karen Clouter ! Canada was a great part of my journey and you know why and to have done the run with Steve O'Brien, to be part also of his journey and mission, made me a better person and blessed me in so many ways - Life is amazing and we all need to live our BEST possible lives, every single day ! Thanks for always believing in me and for sharing in my dream. You also, keep on making a difference and share your story - people do listen and people do care AND people need it !

Like · Reply · Feb 2, 2016 4:46pm

Naomi Janse Van Rensburg · Hoerskool Solomon Senekal

Watse merkwaardige mens. Douw het my Sondag gehelp om my eerste maraton te voltooi in n kwalifiserende tyd van 4:47. Ek het hom in Desember by n wedloop raak geloop en iets waarmee ek gesukkel het was my asemhaling nadat ek baie mense daarvoor gevra het was hy die enigste een wat my gecoach het hierdeur (nog baie werk hieraan, maar dit sal kom). Dit het gevoel of daar vir my deure oop gegaan het toe ek hom ontmoed het. Hy kan pace en hy kan motivate. Thx Douw vir wat jy vir my beteken het en verseker nog gaan beteken.

Unlike · Reply · 1 · Feb 2, 2016 9:17pm

Douw Prinsloo · Nelspruit Hoërskool

Was vir my groot voorreg om saam jou te kon hardloop Sondag en tot by die FINISH line te kon help. Like I said, a marathon is not easy, it is hard work. You did great with our first marathon and the one lesson you have already learned is that one need to have your mind wrapped around the whole marathon idea and then the race is half won ! Good luck with your future races and prepping for ComradesMarathon !

Like · Reply · Feb 3, 2016 7:40am

David van Dyk · University of Pretoria

Indeed an inspiration second to none !! Tx for your energy & willingness to unconditionally invest your time & effort into the running journeys of anybody who asks.

Unlike · Reply · 1 · Feb 2, 2016 9:36pm

Douw Prinsloo · Nelspruit Hoërskool

My pleasure David van Dyk. Running is an awesome sport and we as runners need oneanother, especially us "normal" runners. Happy running mate !

Like · Reply · Feb 3, 2016 7:41am

Dieter Gloeck · Runner at Roads, Tracks & Trails

Let me add something here, as I have known Douw for more than fifteen years. Not only did he trade his tired body with that of an athlete, but the most remarkable transition was in his mind and attitude. He was, no need to conceal this now, a rather "moody" person and you had to catch him in a "good mood" to get something done or a helpful response. Today, Douw is one of the most positive and supportive persons I know. He has helped so many runners and walkers to achieve their goals and he has ploughed back much of his creative talents into the sport, helping clubs with their websites and other charities, apart from his Run for Bibles project. When you see him, he has a big smile ready for you. Douw, you are living proof that one can turn one's life around and make this world a better place. I salute you Douw!

Like · Reply · Feb 3, 2016 5:47pm

Douw Prinsloo · Nelspruit Hoërskool

Dieter Gloeck, thank you for the kind words, coming from you as legend of the road and mentor to me, it is a real compliment. I am humbled by all the messages and words of encouragement, support and appreciation. When I embarked on this journey of self-discovery, it was always my intention to pass on whatever I learn to others, with the hope that I will, in some small way, help someone else to also find and unlock that hidden potential within them. I have met so many wonderful people through running, made wonderful friends who stuck by my, who helped me to reach my goals and now I have this amazing opportunity to give back - paying it forward I guess. I thank God every day for this blessing and this opportunity, to be able to touch and change lives in my own simple way. I am truly blessed!

Like · Reply · Feb 3, 2016 8:09pm

Johannes Janse van Rensburg · Morgenzon Hoërskool

Wow!!! Everybody can learn from this journey

Like · Reply · Feb 4, 2016 10:28pm

Douw Prinsloo · Nelspruit Hoërskool

Thanks Johannes. I appreciate the comment. It is really a journey worth every moment and it is a blessing and privilege to share this with so many other people, runners.

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See also

The Marathon Club

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