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"Action is the real measure of intelligence."

» **Napoleon Hill**



One More Lap Around the Track

I've joked with my sons that you don't know what getting older is like until you have to slide your feet on the floor when you get out of bed, so your popping ankle sounds don't wake anyone.

Spoiler alert: it usually doesn't work.

My 20-year-old asked if it was past injuries or just getting older that does that. I told him, "Yes."

He made a funny comment that got me reflecting on a few things. He said, "You're not old. You just might be too old to do what you used to do." The lyrics of that Toby Keith song rang in my ears.

We proceeded to jest about racing each other, which led to him ask what distances I ran. My answer surprised him.

I told him I have a general idea when I get to the track, but I usually don't know until I've been running for a bit.

Sometimes, I end up running the longest distances on days that I feel unmotivated and absolutely dread getting out there.

He laughed when I told him that I'm usually pretty miserable during the first few laps or even first couple of miles.



Brushing Up on Checking Up

I was surprised recently to receive a call from my dentist's office.

Knowing I didn't have an appointment scheduled, I was curious as to why they were calling.

The young lady asked if I was ready to make up the check-up they had to cancel for me six months ago due to Covid-19 restrictions.

To be honest, I hadn't thought of the dentist since then.

I was ready to say, "Sure," but then asked what the process would be. It was pretty stringent.

I began to tell her that I'd wait until things were back to normal, but then something dawned on me.

If she was calling, chances are my dentist's business had fallen off. I like him. He's a good dude.

His has been a very successful business. You didn't want to miss a check-up, as it could be two months before they could work you in again.

And now... they were calling me. So, I took the appointment.

He said his first couple miles are his favorite because that's when your legs are fresh. I smiled and told him, "Enjoy that while you can."

I explained that few things feel better than finishing a long run, but the only way to get there is to not quit all those times you felt like quitting.

As is often the case, I tied a conversation about one thing into another.

One of my recurring pieces of advice to my sons is that most things worth accomplishing are often going to beat you up a bit.

The important thing to grasp, however, is that the very process of learning to deal with and overcome setbacks can be as rewarding as the goal you are chasing.

Muscle memory works beyond the muscles in your legs and arms.

The muscle between our ears becomes stronger and more resilient, as well.

(No, the brain isn't a muscle. I'm not a biology professor, either.)

As counterintuitive as it may seem, you learn that setbacks are part of the process of progress.

That's true in athletics, business, and...well... life.

It's doubtful anyone enjoys things like having their phone calls and email ignored.

No one likes putting out honest efforts only to hear "No thanks."

Many of our best results and most rewarding experiences are found on the extra mile.

You only get there, however, when you decide not to quit.

When I arrived the following week, they apologized many times for the extra steps they had to take to get me into the chair.

Once there, my favorite hygienist greeted me. She looked like she was ready to work at a nuclear waste site.

I found myself feeling bad that she had to wear a gown, gloves, mask, and a face shield.

When I kidded about feeling guilty for making her have to wear all of that stuff, she quickly replied, "Oh, no. Thank you for being here. We need you all."

We chatted for a few minutes about how hard their business was hit.

They were completely shut down for two months. Then, they only worked on emergencies for several months.

All check-ups and cleanings had to be cancelled.

The office staff were let go and the hygienists had their hours reduced.

This bustling business is now fighting hard to come back. Their customer base has fallen out of their regular routine.

Most future appointments are made immediately after current appointments. When all appointments were cancelled, that chain, and the revenue stream, was broken.

They have brought a staffer back to do nothing but phone patients. Their check-up and cleaning schedule is now filled for two weeks.

I reflected on the importance of each of us increasing outreach and reconnecting with folks we haven't seen in a while.

Routines were broken. Businesses stalled.

What valued customers have you not seen recently?

It's time to check up on them.

**"Remember, it isn't the dreamers who have good lives -
it's the doers."
» Homer Hickam**

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