

## There Is No “ME” In Running

Qualifying for the Boston Marathon is one of the most highly regarded achievements in the sport of running. It’s so significant, in fact, that it could easily be assumed most runners who earn the right to toe the starting line would be doing so just for them self. And yet, as I read through the pre-race coverage leading up to the upcoming 2013 Boston Marathon I can’t help it but notice the large number of fortunate qualifiers running every mile for someone else.

As I’ve read through these stories, I have yet to find two stories that are exactly alike. Many runners may run for the same cause, but their stories and the stories of the individuals they’re helping are as unique as the soles of a person’s feet—no two are exactly alike.

There are the stories of celebrities, like actor [Matt Damon](#) and singer [Joey McIntyre](#) of New Kids On the Block. Damon’s brother and father are running to bring [safe water and toilets to all](#) through their foundation [water.org](#). McIntyre is running to honor his mother who has Alzheimer’s disease. And then there’s the father and son team of [Dick and Rick Hoyt](#), whose many years of endurance exploits have inspired a tremendous amount of support worldwide for people with disabilities through the [Hoyt Foundation](#). Those are just a few stories of the well-known runners.

The stories of the lesser-known runners are just as moving. [Nicole Jacobs](#), is a woman from Stoughton, Massachusetts who’s running to help conquer cancer through the [Dana-Farber Marathon Challenge team](#). [Quentin Miguel](#) is a father running to save his son’s vision through [Mass Eye and Ear](#). [John Dudley](#), [Nanci Gelb](#) and [Terri Tsagaris](#) run to help families in their community work through the loss of a loved one with [The Children’s Room](#) charity.

Running has become an activity that’s about more than any individual who bravely hits the pavement at the wee-early hours of the morning or late in the evening after work. In fact, I think the sport has grown to become more about saving the world. The trend, nowadays, is most people get into the sport of running because they want to make a difference in the lives of others, not just to shed a few pounds or relieve stress.

Throughout its’ history, running has proven itself to be a sport unlike any other. Running doesn’t require a lot of equipment and it doesn’t even need a special venue. With very little exception, anyone can run anywhere at pretty much any time. The most important factor in becoming and remaining a runner seems to be finding the right reason to do it and keep doing it. In other words, motivation is paramount when it comes to lacing up your shoes every day and never quitting when confronted by the most challenging moments of a race.

At some point in their journey every runners journey, they’re asked, “Why do you run?” Most responses reveal a deep rooted motivation to help others; that without this meaningful reason, running would quite possibly an impossible activity to begin and/or consistently do. That’s why running and charitable causes fit so well together. Their relationship has proven to be a symbiotic one because they constantly nurture one another. Combing charity with the sport ([a match initiated by founder of Team in Training, Bruce Cleland](#)) has helped it experience a

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continued rise in participation. As the growing number of charitable causes establishing training groups grows throughout the U.S and the world so too does the running community. And with more people running for these charitable causes, more money, awareness and support is being generated to help solve many social issues affecting a significant number of the world's population today. This union has created an endless source of countless reasons for people to start running and never stop.

The sport of running is a phenomenon because of the profound positive impact it has on anyone who does it and/or is a witness of others doing it. It has a transformative power to change the way individuals see the world, both within themselves as well as around them. And it has a unifying power to bring all walks of life together in one place, at the same time, with one simple, common goal: finishing.

Since 1897, people have travelled to Massachusetts in April to experience the wonder that is the Boston Marathon. And even though most people who will participate know they won't finish near the fields fastest runners, they'll still line up at the starting line with every intention of giving their best effort for 26.2 miles.

Why do they do it? If you were to ask the majority of the runners who will cross Boston's finish line on April 15<sup>th</sup>, they'll tell you that they do it because they know starting and finishing the race will make a difference in the lives others; that experiencing this feeling is a victory both incomparable and irreplaceable.

It's quite clear to me that, for most, running the Boston Marathon is not just about running a race, it's about taking up one's place in a every man, woman and child is a part of regardless of whether or not they run. That race is better known as the human race.