



DENTISTRY IS A MARATHON

How to Stay **FIRED UP, PUMPED UP & INSPIRED**

Matt Jones went from being a three-time cancer conqueror, to surviving a bone marrow transplant, to relearning how to walk, to completing seven marathons on seven continents. He inspired everyone as a Keynote speaker at the 2016 IAPA Conference.



Dentistry, like a marathon, can be an endurance event. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." You have the opportunity to make a difference and impact the lives of others everyday. In order to be your best, you need to stay energized to cross the finish line. In this article, you will learn how you can remain fired up, pumped up, and inspired through developing your "Marathon Mentality." This is defined as the mindset to push through the walls of negativity, setbacks, and obstacles to cross your finish line and achieve your victory.

On September 11, 2002, my life forever changed. At the age of 23, I was told by my doctor, "You have cancer." After spreading to the fluid in my brain, I slipped into an unconscious state. Doctors did not think I would survive. Against all odds, I recovered and had a successful bone marrow transplant. Due to brain damage, I had to relearn how to walk, and have now completed seven marathons on seven continents. Yes, that includes Antarctica!

One of the most important lessons I learned is you can't always control your circumstances but you always have control over your choices. Too often we give away our power by focusing on the circumstances we can't control versus the choices within our control. Here are three choices that helped me that you can use to stay fired up, pumped up, and inspired in the marathon of dentistry as well as life. By making these three choices you will develop your "Marathon Mentality."

1 VISUALIZE YOUR VICTORY

When it comes to your victory, it's not the outside stuff that matters but the inside stuff that counts. It is easy to get discouraged in life. To stay fired up, pumped up, and inspired it is essential to be clear on the victory you want to achieve. Once you can see it, believe it's possible, then you can do it. Lying in my hospital bed I visualized myself crossing the finish line of a marathon. The key is to focus on the victory you are striving to achieve instead of focusing on all the challenges. In life what you focus on, is what you get back. There is timeless truth that says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." What is one victory you are committed to achieve?

2 TAKE ACTION

How do you run a marathon? One step at a time. In order to fulfill the vision you are visualizing, you must take action every single day. It does not matter how small it is. The key is to do something everyday that moves you closer to your vision. This builds momentum. Think back to science class and inertia. Objects at rest tend to stay at rest, while objects in motion stay in motion. Remember, it is not enough to stare up the steps, you have step up the stairs.

One of the things I share in my talks and book is the "Massive Action Principle." Simply stated, the smallest actions produce the biggest results. For example, at two hundred eleven degrees Fahrenheit water is hot. You increase that by one degree to two hundred twelve degrees Fahrenheit, it becomes steam and can power a locomotive engine. As you think about the victory you want to achieve, what is one action step that will take you close to fulfilling it?

3 ELEVATE YOUR ATTITUDE

In order to complete a marathon I had to believe it was possible. Daily I had to check the negative self-talk and the self-defeating inner dialogue. You can't listen to the little voice that says it's impossible. The biggest challenge you will face in dentistry or life is the negative self-talk, self-defeating inner dialogue, and your limiting beliefs. Daily you have to floss your mind to rid it of the negativity plaque that builds up. One way is through positive-talk or affirmations. My all time favorite affirmation is, "I'm too blessed to be stressed." Once you have the attitude that your vision is possible, you will take the necessary action to achieve it.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

Dentistry, like a marathon, can be an endurance event. It can be a roller coaster with ups, downs, and surprising turns. Crossing the finish line in each one of my marathons around the world, were some of the greatest victories in my life. Through developing your "Marathon Mentality" by making the choice to "Visualize Your Victory, Take Action, and Elevate Your Attitude" you will be able to stay fired up, pumped up, and inspired to cross your finish line.