



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Writing this weekly e-column is something like slinging \$20 bills into a vortex; there's no telling where they are going, and whether any are landing in the hands of those cardboard-sign-holding Viet Nam veterans standing by the off ramp. Is anyone reading this stuff? Does it matter?

This summertime book review series isn't "cheap." I'm pounding out the pages, capturing my comments as I process the content. Does it have any value... to you?

This week, that doesn't really matter too much; reading ***Ultra Marathon Man*** had enough benefit for me to energize the process. It's the biographical musings of Dean Karnazes (Penguin Books, 2005).

Karnazes is recently famous for his North Face Endurance 50: launched in September of 2006, he ran 50 marathons (eight were "official," organized races; 42 were "solo efforts," staged with just his support team) in 50 states, in 50 days. No small feat.

That seven-week interlude came after his bio/book. In it, he really tells the story of his family background and average youth, including the disheartening impact of a high school track coach who laughed at Dean's running style, which caused him to set aside his heart for running for 15 years. The night of his 30th birthday - with more booze in his bod



than allowed behind the wheel - he reacted to his empty life by stripping to his skivvies, putting on tennis shoes... and leaving his sleeping family behind as he reintroduced himself to running with a 30 mile nighttime jaunt.

Confession: I'm a runner. Have been since April of 1978. Ran my first marathon in November, the same year. My sports heroes have never been "ball-jocks;" they have been the grind-out-the-miles guys and gals who push themselves to the limits. Karnakes is my kind of guy: his PR (personal best) in the marathon is reported to be around 3:00 (that's three hours). My kind of guy (my PR is 3:17, and will never be bettered by me). What he lacks in speed, he makes up in perseverance.

Among his accomplishments, he has run the Western States Endurance Run (100 miles across the Sierras, in less than 24 hours) multiple times. His perspective: "It really didn't matter how long it took to get the

job done; what mattered was getting it done. This was an exploration into the possibilities of self. Being a champion meant not quitting, no matter how tough the situation became, and no matter how badly the odds seemed stacked against you. If you had the courage, stamina and persistence to cross the finish line, you were a champion." (p. 85)

Sounds a lot like the analogy used by Paul to describe the life of the fruit-producing follower of Jesus Christ: *"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)*

Life isn't about speed and glory; it's about finishing... and His glory. No verses in Karnakes book... but a flesh-and-blood life story about an oft-used picture of what Paul used to challenge us.

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