



JEFF GALLOWAY

**MENTAL
TRAINING
FOR RUNNERS**

NO MORE EXCUSES!

MEYER
& MEYER
SPORT



JEFF GALLOWAY was an average teenage runner who kept learning and working harder until he became an Olympian. He is the author of the best-selling running book in North America (*Galloway's Book on Running*) and is a *Runners World* columnist, as well as an inspirational speaker for more than 200 running and fitness sessions each year. He has worked with over 400,000 average people training for specific goals and Galloway's quest for an injury-free marathon training program led him to develop group training programs in 1978. Galloway is the designer of the walk run, low-mileage marathon training program (Galloway RUN WALK RUN method) with an over 98% success rate.



Mental Training for Runners

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INTRODUCTION

YOUR INNER STRENGTH—BELIEVE IN IT!

You have within yourself the power to overcome low motivation on the lowest energy days and the power to keep going when there are challenges. By using the proven strategies in this book you can also make permanent nutrition changes, manage stress, and maintain control over fatigue and injury.

You'll also learn how neuroscientists have found that distance running stimulates the growth of new brain cells and improves thinking and learning at any age. Even after a few running steps, brain circuits are turned on for a better attitude, more vitality, and personal empowerment.

We now have proof that running transforms the brain in many positive ways. Revolutionary research begun in the 1990s, made possible by new technology, identified the brain circuits that are turned on when we run. These circuits trigger the release of brain hormones that balance emotions, enhance problem solving, and help us to make better decisions.

With the help of my wife Barbara, who wrote the foreword to this book, I've discovered nuggets of research that explain why some runners stay motivated and some do not, why some perform well and others do not, and why some enjoy their training and others take it like medicine. Leading researchers you will read about in this book are the following:

- » Neuroscientist John Ratey, MD, in his breakthrough book *Spark*, explains how exercise activates key circuits and stimulates brain hormones that grow brain cells and improve mental function.
- » Scientists Candace Pert, PhD, and Bruce Lipton, PhD, explain the biological and molecular changes that allow us to control our emotions and reformat negative behavior patterns in the subconscious.
- » John Sarno, MD, has shown that stress can trigger negative hormones and a pain response—with management techniques.
- » Robert Portman, PhD, and John Ivy, PhD, detail the brain circuits involved in eating behaviors with ways of gaining control.

For four decades, I've been researching, trying motivational strategies, tabulating results, and learning from experience. The ideas inside are the latest evolution of a method that has been practiced successfully by thousands. I offer these as one runner to another based upon the success of my clients. As always, seek medical advice for health issues from those who specialize in the area of your issue—especially someone who wants to find a way for you to continue running.

You can do it!

Jeff Galloway

FOREWORD

TO BE HAPPY, JOYOUS, AND CONFIDENT

By Barbara Galloway

When Jeff told me that he was writing a book on motivation, my first thought was, “for what do you want to be motivated?” Most runners have several or several dozen reasons to be and stay motivated. For me, the answer is in the title of this preface. I want to be happy, joyous, and confident.

The late Dr. George Sheehan, cardiologist, philosopher, and *Runner’s World* columnist often quoted Emerson who told us to “Be first a good animal.” There is a lot of satisfaction when we follow our most natural patterns of exertion—to move, walk, and run. At a fast pace there are more aches, pains, and fatigue. But when you choose a relaxing pace, with the right balance of running and walking, you can be a good, happy, and joyous animal.

I believe Emerson was telling us that we have within ourselves all that we need for happiness. By using our body regularly, which engages our mind and spirit, we improve quality and longevity. Positive things happen when we are first and foremost good, active animals.

For many years, this has been my ultimate motivation. But, like many experiences in life, running begs us to dig deeper. I have made it a mission to search for ideas that can enhance motivation to exercise and to share these with Jeff. The ideas presented in this book have enriched our running experiences, and I hope that you will experience similar benefits.

I’m not going to stop looking and reading. There are so many great ideas, experiences, and opportunities out there.

Get motivated, stay motivated.

Barbara Galloway

PREFACE

TAKING THE PUKING OUT OF RUNNING— MY STORY

At the age of 13, I was a very overweight, lazy kid. I wasn't proud of being fat, and I realized that exercise could be a key to losing my extra baggage. But in my internal priority list, rated above being lean was the avoidance of exercise. I now know that I had programmed myself to believe that it hurt because of some puking incidents after being pushed too hard by a PE coach who wanted to help me get in shape.

Then I enrolled in a school that required male students to engage in strenuous activities or sports after school. Generally, I'm not a fan of forcing kids to exercise, but it worked for me because of the spontaneous fun that emerged from almost every run with the cross-country team. The head coach, Paul Koshewa, was the most lenient in the school and allowed us "options." I initially joined a group of lazy kids who would jog 200 yards to the woods and goof off.

But one day, an older kid who I liked said, "Galloway, you're coming with us today." My anxiety soared because these kids actually ran long distances—3 miles! I had my lazy boy strategy in place: When I reached the protective cover of the woods I would grab my leg, claim I was injured, and throw rocks in the creek as they ran on. But the runners started telling jokes and then gossip about the teachers. I listened at first, huffing and puffing. With a little more fitness I began to participate in the conversations. We shared stories, argued, and more than anything else, enjoyed the fun environment that we created each day.

Within 10 weeks I was hooked on the endorphin experience, and over half a century later, I still am. My grades significantly improved. I discovered that even when things had not been going well at school or personally, the workout with my group turned my attitude around. The bonding resulted in honest friendships based upon mutual respect that have lasted to this day.

But there was something more powerful about the running experience that pulled me out on the roads and trails by myself when the school year ended. The same force was at work

years later when my Navy ship pulled into port after three weeks at sea, and I found myself wanting to run before I did anything else. Regardless of how tired or stressed I felt before, I received a boost to mind body and spirit afterward which was life-changing.

After years of study, I came to believe that as the frontal lobe of the brain evolved to give us judgement and perspective, humans have been searching for meaning in life. When we perform certain positive activities, we stimulate brain circuits that trigger biological changes at the cellular level. Brain hormones are also released that change the brain in many positive ways. The bottom line is that after a run we feel good about ourselves and about the quality of our life.

Many are drawn to running because of these powerful and unique rewards. Without the right tools, however, many push too hard, and break something, burn out, even puke like I did. The common and mistaken assumption is that they are not designed to run. I have spent my life finding solutions to problems experienced by hundreds of thousands of runners.

I've discovered that for each challenge there is a cognitive strategy that can allow almost every person to take charge over their plan of action, their mental attitude, and their motivation. A new world opens up for those who have a proven strategy. They become the captains of their ships, navigating challenges, experiencing empowerment, and learning along the way.

So get out there and run!



1 HOW TO STAY MOTIVATED

STRATEGIES THAT ACTIVATE THE BRAIN'S CONTROL CENTER—OVERRIDING THE “MONKEY BRAIN”

Those who have a proven strategy tend to be more successful than those who don't. They also tend to stay motivated, don't give up, work out more often, and enjoy more of their runs. Strategies activate the conscious brain—the executive brain—which allows one to manage attitude as the running experience is managed.

The simple strategies in this book can keep you under the control of the conscious brain as you plan your workouts, focus on mantras, and follow the schedule. You are in the

command center, the captain of your ship, maintaining control of your thoughts and actions. You will also find similar strategies for nutrition and staying injury free.

But there is another brain component we often use by default which—under stress—can lower motivation and cause us to lose our focus. This is our ancient subconscious brain, which I will call the *monkey*, or *reflex* brain. This original brain evolved over tens of millions of years and contains thousands of stimulus-response (reflex) behavior patterns.

The reflex brain has a million times the processing capacity compared with the conscious brain. So we rely on it to conduct most of the activities that keep us alive (heart and lung function, blood flow, etc.). In addition, this amazing brain subconsciously interprets hormone signals from various organs and body parts and triggers the release of hormones to correct problems in organ function and to promote healing.

The ancient brain will also take control over habitual activities that we have learned. During the first few times we ride a bicycle, for example, the human brain consciously (and awkwardly at first) drives the body through a series of actions as we fall down and learn to correct mistakes. By repeating the successful behavior patterns regularly, reflex patterns are established, and riding the bicycle becomes more and more automatic. Once a behavior has been learned it is hardwired into the reflex brain, allowing us to pedal down the road subconsciously while the conscious brain solves problems or philosophizes.

But we have another operating system in our mental structure: the conscious brain, in our frontal lobe. This uniquely human brain is a more recent development (only a few million years in the making) and allows us to gain conscious control over a situation. The conscious brain is left free and ready to solve more serious problems, avoid threats, and take action. The circuits that tend to be in the left side of the frontal lobe conduct logical transactions. The right side is the intuitive and creative action center, connecting us to hidden strengths and innovative solutions which are often unexpected.

The natural tendency when we do something that is habitual is to allow the monkey brain to be in charge. For example, once we have learned how to run and have established a routine route with a regular workout pattern, the subconscious brain usually takes over as we start down the road or trail. On many days this is great because the conscious brain can either work out a logical solution in the left side or be entertained and empowered by the right side.

But if we default to the subconscious brain, it will monitor stress—and this can affect motivation. A stress increase greater than normal will stimulate the monkey brain to release anxiety hormones so that you are not so sure about getting out the door, doing the workout you planned, or going the full distance.

As stress increases from heat, cold, precipitation, pace desired, fatigue, goal for the season, or aches and pains, the reflex brain goes into protection mode, and negative attitude hormones are triggered which greatly reduce your motivation to go on and can make you downright miserable. If no conscious action is taken, the monkey brain will reduce blood flow to the digestive system, waste removal system, immune system, and frontal lobe.

The second way that the reflex brain tries to shut you down when under stress is by a condition called tension myositis syndrome (TMS). When the monkey brain becomes overloaded with stress, it subconsciously controls a reduction in blood flow to areas that have been damaged. The resulting pain is much greater than it normally would be for the amount of damage. Many runners have reported to me that their common running injuries have been diagnosed as TMS: plantar fascia, iliotibial band, hamstring, back, knee, neck, etc. When they used the conscious strategies mentioned in this book, the pains went away quite quickly.

You don't have to eliminate or even reduce stress to stop the negative hormones or TMS pain. By using a cognitive strategy, you will shift control to the frontal lobe. The executive brain overrides the monkey brain. Following the mental training programs in this book will help you gain control over your motivation even when under stress and stay positive by stopping the release of negative hormones, while opening up the blood flow to TMS areas. (Main source is John Sarno, MD, *Healing Back Pain*, or *Mindbody Prescription*).

Mental training can also help you access the power of the right brain in the frontal lobe. This can unlock intuitive sources of inner strength, conserve energy, and initiate creative solutions to problems.

Regular mental training will reprogram the reflex brain for any realistic challenge, while also setting up patterns for pushing past barriers, maximizing performance, and even reducing chronic pain. When we are young, we learn many behavior patterns that become embedded into the reflex brain. Some are helpful, and some are counterproductive later in life.

For example, many young runners learn in PE class or in high school sports that they should not walk when they run—that walking is “failure.” This is hardwired in many adults who try to take up running and believe that the only way to be a successful runner is to run continuously. Most will reach a certain distance where they hit a fatigue wall or become injured because of this compulsion to run continuously. They feel like failures because they believed in some counterproductive subconscious programming.

But every year, thousands of former non-stop runners reprogram the reflex brain after reading one of my books; attending one of my retreats, schools, or clinics; or joining one of our training groups. The logical reasons for taking strategic walk breaks activate the frontal lobe. Through the reinforcement of the members of a Galloway group or my instruction, they do it. The rewards of endorphins and a positive attitude boost allow them to push through the former wall, recover quickly, and often record faster times. A vibrating timer helps to reinforce the run walk run behavior into a successful pattern, and it becomes hardwired. I hear from dozens of former non-stop runners who used to feel they were a “failure” by taking walk breaks but who now cross the finish line of a marathon, half marathon, 10K, or 5K with the most wonderful feeling of accomplishment experienced in their lives and often with faster times. The reprogramming is complete!

The actions of 1) taking charge over the reflex brain, 2) believing in the method, and 3) performing the mostly gentle training of mind and body will activate the positive attitude circuits and stimulate positive mental hormones.

Note: To access strategies for activating the frontal lobe and leaving the monkey brain behind, skip to the chapter, Mental Training Strategies. The chapter, Your Motivation Training Plan, offers a step-by-step method with tools to stay on a cognitive track and practical tips for specific situations.