

A Brand-New Year

By: Betsy Bearden

It's the beginning of a brand-new year—a clean slate with an empty agenda. It's almost as if we have this one chance each year to hit the control + alt + delete buttons and start anew. Well, almost. Speaking for myself, I have learned some valuable lessons from some of the really stupid things I did last year, like buying a brand-new pair of running shoes the afternoon before the Peachtree Road Race. I can attest that the recommended break-in period for all new running shoes that I have always heard about, is definitely not a myth! There will be blisters. Oh, yes ... there will be blisters.

Among the many New Year's resolutions made this year, two of them I intend on keeping will be to get in shape, and to *stay* in shape. The other is to become a better listener. Okay, for those of you who know me, this could be a stretch. Did my husband, Steven, try to tell me not to buy the new shoes the day before the race? Yes. Did the shoe salesman flinch when I told him I intended to wear the new shoes the next day in the race when he sort of mumbled, "I don't think that's a very good idea." Yes. Did I listen? No.

This will be the fourth year that I will have to push myself to get into shape by July because I don't *stay* in shape after July is over! Each year I am gung ho about my goal of being able to run (okay, I do tend to walk most of the way) 6.2 miles under two hours. At my age of ... well, at my age of somewhere between 45 and 55, it does not get any easier and regular, year-round training is the key to it all.

About two years ago, I was walking up Kennesaw Mountain on a frequent basis. There are always many people of all ages and sizes walking and running the mountain. Most of the time we nod, smile, sigh, or grunt at each other in acknowledgement that we are cool because we are doing something good for our bodies.

But this one particular day, a young man was hiking with his young daughter. I would say he was around 25 or so. They passed me on his way down as I approached the top. He stopped me and said, "Wow! Did you just walk up the mountain?" I told him that I had walked up the mountain, half way back down, and was on my way back up again. He grabbed his chest and said "No Way! I am going home and tell my mother-in-law about you!" I thought I was going to have to administer the guy CPR right on the spot.

Kennesaw Mountain is no big deal. It's only about a mile and a half up—straight up! My gosh. Does the age of somewhere between 45 and 55 really look that old to someone that young? Just because I was sweating profusely, red faced, and out of breath, I can't imagine why his reaction was as it was. *Geez Buddy, thanks.*

So, back to the listening thing: Steven also tells me that we need to commit ourselves to participating in 5Ks throughout the year, you know, to stay motivated. I have to admit that come January first, after all that Tofurkey and dressing+cakes, pies, cookies+ yeast rolls and butter= I ain't fittin' into those skinny jeans I wore up until July of last year!

I am committing myself right here and now to getting in shape and to *staying* in shape. Okay, the heat is on. The Peachtree will be here again before I know it, and my best time so far is one hour and forty-four minutes. I am planning on making it one hour thirty-minutes this year! That is my goal, so please—if you see me at the sporting goods store on the day before the race, buying a new pair of shoes, promptly take me by the hand and tell me to go home! I promise I will listen.

Happy New Year and may we all be blessed with peace and prosperity.

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