

Female Runners Make a Difference  
Donna Deegan  
11/29/2010

**Bennett Cohen:** Good day and welcome to the first Women's Running Telesummit. My name is Bennett Cohen, co founder and president of the International Association of Women Runners. Gail Gould, my fellow co founder and president, cannot be with us on this call. Gail and I are delighted to host the first Women's Running Telesummit.

This exclusive event features five expert guest speakers over the course of four days; and by participating, we all have the unprecedented opportunity to learn from our experts, their wisdom, and vast experience in the field of women's running. Gail and I are honored to be your hosts, and it's our way to be of service to the International Women's Running community.

During the presentation all listener lines are muted; but at various points and times during the presentation, you will have the opportunity to ask questions and to get your questions answered by our guest speaker.

Today we're pleased to have a journalist, philanthropist, and marathoner Donna Deegan. Donna exemplifies triumph over adversity as a three-time breast cancer survivor. She is the founder and president of the Donna Foundation, which fronts the critical needs of underserved women with breast cancer.

As an avid marathoner, Donna was inspired to establish the annual race 26.2 with Donna, the National Marathon to Finish Breast Cancer. 26.2 with Donna is the only marathon in the US that is dedicated exclusively to raising funds for breast cancer research and care, 100% of the race proceeds go directly to breast cancer research at Mayo Clinic and to women living with breast cancer.

Donna is a published author of two books that chronicle her journey and give encouragement to women with breast cancer. Donna is the evening news anchor for First Coast News, Gannett Broadcastings' NBC and ABC affiliate stations in Jacksonville, Florida. She lives with her husband and children in Jacksonville Beach.

The title of today's presentation is *Female Runners Make a Difference*. Donna will discuss how female charity runners are making a difference both for the nonprofit organizations they support, as well as for the running industry as a whole. Donna, thank you for joining us.

**Donna Deegan:** Well Bennett, it's such a pleasure to be here; and let me say first of all before we get start how wonderful it is that I think that you've established this organization. What a great opportunity for women all over the country and the world to connect over something that we all care very deeply about, and that's running. So it really is a pleasure to be involved, so thank you.

I was saying to Bennett earlier that it may come to this from a different perspective from many experts on running, and that is that I'm not an elite runner. I'm your average garden variety runner. I think in my entire life I ran one set four-hour marathon, and that

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was ancient history, long ago before I ever dealt with cancer a few times. Most of my association with this topic really has come through my experience as both a news anchor and as a three-time breast cancer survivor.

I have always known the power of women. There is nothing like the will of a woman, and I think everybody knows that; but you get a woman behind a cause and Katy bar the door. I think that's why women have been so successful in terms of fund raising and running; but for me, just to give you a little bit of background about my situation, I started running for the same reason that many women start running at the very beginning, and that is that I had just had my second child. I had done my two-month maternity leave, and I was just about ready to go back to work where as a news anchor I have to wear a lot of fitted and tailored clothing, and I had a really tough time getting my [inaudible glitch in tape 3:55] buttoned.

So I decided that I better start doing something to get myself into decent shape. So I really started running thinking it was going to be torture. Frankly, I thought okay, I'm going to do this just until I get myself into good shape. I started with a couple of blocks and then a couple of more blocks; and before I knew it, I was addicted to 5K's, and then once I ran a 5K, I wanted to do a 15K and ran the Gate River Run. Once I did that, I couldn't wait to do a marathon.

It was something that just snapped inside of me when I started to run that it was just the most wonderful empowering experience that one could have. It was, all at once a great way to get in shape; but I really got the whole endorphin thing right away. Serotonin is a wonderful thing for the brain, and so I instantly connected with other women in my community that were involved in the same thing. Then when I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I really established a much stronger connection with women in my community.

I started an online journal, which I guess people now call a blog. Back then we just called it an online journal. I connected with women who were going through a similar experience, but I started the Donna Foundation at that time; and I immediately decided that the best way to raise funds for that foundation was to do that through running because that was my love. So I started off very, very small just asking people to buy Donna Foundation T-shirts and to run with me. The big race in Jacksonville is the Gate River Run of a distance that many people like they can tackle.

So I started out with a small group of people doing that, and then ran into one day, Jeff Galloway, that running guru, who has helped so many people, especially women get involved in running. Jeff said to me what do you think about training some people to do a marathon? I said sure. I said what would be successful to you, and he said well, how about ten people. I said okay, I'll throw it out there.

Well, we had 86 the first year, and the huge majority of those people were women and many of them who had never run a step. So once we started to train; and I know if

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you're involved in running, you've probably heard of Jeff's program and his whole run, walk, run program. It's perfect for anyone getting started and especially for busy women who have a goal of wanting to get themselves into shape or wanting to run but don't know how to necessarily get out there and just do it all at once. It was a wonderful opportunity to train women to run a marathon.

So we started to do that and connect with women that way. Then before you knew it, I had done research and determined that there was no marathon for breast cancer, and the National Marathon to Finish Breast Cancer was born at that point with the great help of Jeff Galloway and the wonderful folks at the Mayo Clinic but would have never happened without a whole lot of female support. Our marathon has 74% women, 74%, now think about this; women weren't even running marathons much before the last 30 years or so.

So we've come a long way from the time when Kathryn Switzer had to sort of put her initials on the Boston Marathon ledger and get herself into the Boston Marathon by sort of not really pretending to be a man, but not really admitting to being a woman. Now we have 54% of runners in road races, 53% rather are women; and more and more women are getting involved in marathoning every day. Our race is just one example of that, and it's a wonderful connection for women, especially distance running because women are just so much more built for that than men are. Women are more patient, don't you know, than men are; and we have a much better grasp of endurance, I think. Not to downplay men, they're great competitors; but in terms of being patient and enduring and recognizing there are other things beside the competitiveness, I think we have definitely got the corner on that market.

So women's running has grown tremendously. It's really sort of amazing to see from the time that I first took my first steps, and I didn't start running until the beginning of the 1990s; but if you track back 20 years, we had really about a million women who were road race finishes, about a million. If you fast forward to 2009, the latest year for which there are statistics available, that number has swelled to 5.4 million. So women have really taken over this sport of running, which is fantastic.

It's fun to see that number grow, and I was talking to Jeff about this the other day; and I said is it that men have stopped running so much, and he said no. There are still as many men running road races as there ever have been, but women have taken over the lead because their numbers have just grown so much. Women have connected with running in a way that no one ever really anticipated. I believe for the first time now more women have subscriptions to *Runner's World Magazine* than men do. There are all kinds of incredible statistics when it comes to that, but it's neat to see because I enjoy seeing women connect with something that not only can make them healthier, but can give them more self-confidence; and it can help them to connect with other women.

Then when you talk about running for a cause, hundreds of millions of dollars now have been raised by women in cause-based races. When we first started our marathon, we

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thought what a wonderful idea to connect the cause to the race. Well, now everybody in the world is starting to do that in different ways, and it's a wonderful opportunity for women to connect with running and to raise money for a cause. At our race alone, we've raised \$2.5 million just in the past few years with our race; and I would say that probably 90% of our fund raisers are women because women, like I said, you get them behind a cause and they do amazing work.

So I would like to talk more about the impact that running can make on women's health as well, but I've left it to pause, and see if anybody has any questions about where we've gone so far and if you have anything that you'd like to talk about?

**Bennett Cohen:** Okay, to ask a question, please press star 6; you will be placed in a Q&A cue, and then you'll receive further instructions when it's your turn to ask your question. So for questions, please press star 6.

Actually Donna, I have a quick question. What was the first year of the 26.2 with Donna?

**Donna Deegan:** It was 2008, so we're coming up on our fourth year now; and we've grown. Our first race we had about 7,000 people, and this year we're anticipating over 10,000. So we've grown nicely and our half marathon, I would tell you Bennett, is 80% women. The half marathon really has become the race of choice for a lot of women because it doesn't take an incredibly long enough time to train for, but just enough time to feel like you've really accomplished something big. So in our marathon I'd say about 72% women, but maybe 68%. I'm not sure as we speak what the numbers are this year, but last year it was 68% women.

So it's really cool to see the way it's grown, and the folks that get involved in our race, they're not required to fund raise because our whole race is a fund raiser; but a lot of women do choose to do that.

**Bennett Cohen:** Great, that is great. Okay, will the person whose numbers ending in 2365 go ahead please. Go ahead, please ask your question.

**Sandy:** Hi there, it's Sandy from Toronto. I've just been reading an awful lot lately about women's races being run as women-only races, and there's a little bit of backlash happening in that regard. What's your view on taking that sort of stand?

**Donna Deegan:** Well, I don't really understand the backlash. I think it's a really great opportunity for women to get together and have girls' trips and get involved in races where they can just hang out together and do that. However, as you know probably, you can't really exclude men from women's-only races. Even the Disney Princesses has 97% women because it's the 3% men who decide to run in that race; but I guess I don't understand the backlash there. I think it's a wonderful opportunity to get women involved in running anytime you can; and for some women, it's just more comfortable to

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be out there running with other women. So what's the big deal? What do you think about it?

**Sandy:** Well, it seems to be that there's so much, we've gone so long complaining about being exclusive or excluded; and all of a sudden, we're doing the same thing. So that's how I kind of see the backlash. I can understand that.

**Donna Deegan:** Well, I get that; but I just think that a little much is being made of it. I mean, obviously men are not excluded from those races. It's called the women's event, but men can't be excluded and they're not. The Nike Women's Marathon had 94% women and 6% men. So men are running those races; they're just geared to women. Really, that's what they should say; they shouldn't be called women's only, and they should be called geared toward women. I think if you see the explosive numbers in women's running, it's certainly understandable why people would want to capitalize on that.

We try to encourage more men to run in our race because I always say that whenever a woman is affected by breast cancer, a man is certainly affected; and beyond that, we just love to have more guys involved, but I think because it is a women's disease, we have a large concentration of women that run. So I just think that's bound to happen with the explosion in this sport and in the women's participation of the sport. So would you like to see those organizations that are offering the women's only races for them to not frame them that way?

**Sandy:** I think perhaps that we could frame it differently in terms of let's learn from what women want from those marathons and share that learning back again. So the races that are just considered to be neutral are perhaps oriented towards the men first could learn from some of the things that we're adding to the races for women only or women focused kind of race, for example; you know, private changing areas for afterwards. I think that's a possibility.

**Donna Deegan:** I can tell you that in our race, the number one thing that I said when we started, and this is absolutely geared towards women, was we will not run out of porta-potties. We have porta-potties everywhere on our course, and it's probably...it's so funny. Beyond our wonderful organization, it's probably the number one comment that we get after the race was yeah, I never had to worry about not having a porta-potty; I didn't have to squat in the bushes.

So I think yes, I think there are things that a lot of races can do to sort of gear things more towards women's participation; but really if you look at, I mean, in the Boston Marathon, it used to be so heavily men. Now 40% of the people that run that run that race are women, 40%; that's the biggest boys' club there is in running really. So women are just reaching out there on all levels. It's not just these women's races; they're participating all over the place. I guess I just look more on the positive side of it. I don't see it as such a big deal; and if men want to come join in, that's great.

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**Sandy:** That's great to me, thank you.

**Donna Deegan:** Thank you, thanks for listening. Are there any other questions?

**Bennett Cohen:** Are there any other questions? Looks like not, okay, why don't you go ahead and continue; oops, one more question. Linda, please press star 6 and go ahead.

**Linda:** Yes, my name is Linda Moore; and my question is how do you decide like what items you would put in the race, how you set it up because the one reason I started running is for women because of the new women's races because they interest me more. They have more things because you can bring your family. It's more geared to where it's a lot of other things are going on other than just the race. I think that's what women like; most of us do bring our families with us. So I just kind of want to

**Donna Deegan:** What interests you most in a race that's geared to you, Linda? Just out of curiosity, what is it that they're offering in women's races that you specifically find attractive?

**Linda:** Like the Princess Marathon; it's perfect for me to bring my kids and my husband because I can run, I can do what I like to do, but it doesn't exclude them because then they can go and do things they like to do as well. So whenever I'm planning that I'm going to run, I always think about that. I always think okay, what else can they do there, and what's going to be there. Then all the women there that were there last year, just about all of them had their family with them. I just didn't see that when I went to my first race that was mostly men. It was a few there, and they might have had their wives or a couple of kids; but most of the women races you see that a lot of them had their families with them.

So for women, I think it's more things we have to think about when we go to do a race or we want to participate in a race because there are so many other things that we have to work around it. So what I see with a lot of the women in races, they do have like okay, they have the kids' races there, or they do have something where the family can do while you're running your race. They can...there are other things that are going on.

So what I've seen in those races, I see that I can participate and bring my family. So they can participate and not feel like they're getting left out. It's just oh, this is what mommy wants to do. She's not thinking about anything about us; she's just running and that's it, or my husband doesn't feel like he's left out, but he feels like he can do something while I'm out doing the race or whatever.

So like the Diva race, I did the Diva race in Long Island; and that was great too because they had all these other little fun things that the kids could do, and my husband, he kind of gave out water and he kind of liked that. So there were other things that they could

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participate in. I just didn't have that in the first two races I did; that was mostly weren't like those focused around them, you know, the women thing. It was just more like okay, you come, you run, and it was kind of over; and it just seems like the women in the cancer races, the breast cancer races, is just a little bit more interesting to me for the family. They're more geared towards that, so I do like them more for that reason.

**Donna Deegan:** I can tell you that in our race, and I think in a lot of the races in which women are getting heavily involved, you tend to bring...the woman that comes to run tends to bring a couple of people with her. Whether those are family members or whether they're other women, that's obviously good for all sorts of reasons; but it sounds like you're saying offer something outside of the race.

I think a lot of races are starting to get that, but I will say to you that the other thing that I think is wonderful about whether it's a women's race or whatever of bringing your family with you when you run is that there are a number of studies that show that if you're running, you are impacting your children. They then will be far more likely to run or to exercise; and of course, that impacts their health in all sorts of ways, in addition to the fact that you just bring them and they have a good time. They see that mommy is having a good time and doing something healthy at the same time.

So it sounds like what you're saying is that if races want to get your business, they need to have something beyond just the start and finish line for your family to do.

**Linda:** Right because my little son actually ran a couple of the fund raises that are a mile long, and that's like really great for him for an eleven-year-old. So they definitely have to have some other things there for me to sign up and be interested in doing it, and I think I see that more with the women races than I do with the other ones. Like you said, they're starting; but I definitely speak a lot more with the women ones.

**Donna Deegan:** I know Nike Women's Marathon has plenty of on it, and that's always a good thing for women -- chocolate and pedicures, from what I understand, but too many hills on that one for me. I haven't quite gotten myself to that one yet. I hear you and I think that the races that are getting more competitive are the races that are doing that, but that are also offering a cause component because that's really something whether you're in any kind of business. If you take a can of coke and you put a breast cancer ribbon on one, and you don't put it on another one, the can of coke with the breast cancer ribbon; not that that's a good example because you don't really want women to drink coke. That's not really the best thing in the world to drink.

Any product that has a cause-based logo on it is going to do better than one without, and women are still the primary shoppers and they're really driving the sales of that stuff. So that's why you're seeing a lot of these races incorporating a cause component of some sort, however small. It really does attract the female runners, and female runners are the drivers of most of these hundreds of millions of dollars that are being made in cause-based runs, whether it's something like the race for the cure, or whether

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it's a long walk or whatever it is. The races that have a cause-based component are seeing their growth really take off, and women are really the driving force behind that.

**Linda:** Right, right, definitely the cause, definitely always look at that when you're going to do a race. I know I do always.

**Donna Deegan:** Well thank you Linda, I appreciate that; and it's good feedback for me as I continue to try to find ways to make Jacksonville Beach attractive to people to come. When we first started, really what I did was is I went to all my female running friends, and some of my male running friends too, and I said what is it that would attract you to coming to the race; and I heard a lot of the same things. So we've really tried to incorporate a lot of that as well, but I think you're seeing that all over the country now as women continue to get more involved in racing.

**Linda:** Thank you.

**Bennett Cohen:** One comment that I'd like to make in the difference between, sort of like a non-women specific race and a race that's geared specifically for women is that my wife and I notice that when we volunteer at a race, if it's just a regular non-women's specific race, we will rarely get thanked by a runner for volunteering. However, at women's only or women's specific races, we get thanked very regularly by runners as they come by and get water or as we direct traffic as a course marshal. They thank us for coming out and supporting them.

**Donna Deegan:** Well Bennett, I can tell you that from our race, and that's where I have most of my experience now, if you add a cause to that, to the fact that you have mostly women and you add that the entire race is based on a cause, oh boy; I'd tell you I think I described it as it's like 26 miles doped up on joy. I mean, that's really what it seem like if people are just absolutely what you said, I mean, you can't take a step without someone saying thank you for running. That is an experience that you don't often get. At some places you'd go long spaces before you ever see a person, and rarely are they paying enough attention to you to say thank you for running.

We notice that that is a constant and again, is one of the top comments that we get about our race; but I think in women's races in general, I think you're absolutely right. That whole element of gratitude is really there. Truly, I mean you talk about women's-only races; and again, I'm not advocating women's-only races necessarily; I think it's always great when you have women and men involved. One of the things that women really bring to the table in terms of their running and therefore raising ability and everything else is they really bring a heart into running.

I think for men, so often it is about simply beating the other guy; and you do studies and you read studies about women and why they run, they don't run to beat the other guy; they run to compete against themselves, but they also run because they like the fellowship of running. One of the things that I do here, and I know you know that Jeff

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Galloway has programs all over the country; but here we have a group of about 400 or 500 people that we've developed, and I'm sure part of that is because of my broadcast megaphone. Those people running with us every Saturday, we have a group that runs together; and when you run twenty miles chatting away as you're running, those miles sort of melt beneath you.

Some women might be listening to that and saying well, you can't possibly run as fast if you're doing that. It's really not true. Our research shows that running with a group not only increases your ability to complete the distance, but almost everybody; I'd use my husband as an example. Even though he's not a woman, thankfully, he's qualified for Boston in the last several years incorporating the run/walk and the group running that we do. He's gotten faster and so have many of our runners, and I think the whole social aspect of it is something that women really get.

So you look at almost any race that a woman travels to and oftentimes she comes with another woman, and there's a whole fellowship thing involved in there. I think also women are more geared to the whole idea of just what it does for their bodies. Running creates an incredible feeling of well being and also gets you in great shape, and I think women have really stuck on that. So it's very cool to see, very cool to see.

**Bennett Cohen:** I think you touched on an important point for, and this is a generalization of course; but for a lot of men, they tend to look at running as another way to compete, but for many women who take up running, it's a transformation that occurs, like running has an amazing transformative effect.

**Donna Deegan:** Well it does because it increases your self-esteem right off the bat because if you feel better about your physical appearance, you're going to feel better about yourself. Beyond that there really, truly is a chemical reaction that occurs in the brain when you run enough, and it makes you a better person to be around. I think that that sort of spreads out, and you get women together that are feeling that way and it's a very big positive. I don't think women are quite, and I'm not, please don't get me wrong here; I'm not saying women aren't competitive. We had a couple of women who qualified for the Olympic trial in our race last year, which we were very excited about.

Your huge majority of women who are running are not running necessarily to break any land speed records. They may want to do better than they did in their last race, but largely they're running because they enjoy the fellowship of it, and they enjoy the way that it makes them feel; and that's the big positive in it. I think for the entire running community, that's the big positive for it and why running has really enjoyed a nice resurgence here over the last decade because women bring a whole different perspective to it than men do.

**Bennett Cohen:** Okay. Is there anyone else who wants to ask a question right now? Please press star 6, and that will put you in the cue? Okay. It looks like there are no more questions right now, Donna so we can continue. Go ahead Donna.

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**Donna Deegan:** I did want to talk a little bit about the whole health issues involved in running because for women, those can truly be huge. Again, I come to it from that perspective, as somebody who is a breast cancer survivor; and my oncologist who is one of the best know oncologists in the country completely, and he totally believes that running is a preventative for breast cancer and also a preventative for a recurrence. If you break down the numbers in terms of exercise in cancer, you really can equate exercise to medicine. I mean, it's unbelievable the difference in the cancer rates from people who exercise and specifically those who run and those who don't.

There are about 60 studies that are out there right now, all of which conclude that people who involve themselves in exercise, and some of these are specific to running, can decrease their risks of two types of cancer. One is breast and one is colon. The studies range anywhere from 20%-80% on that with most doctors saying that they believe, and they can very easily say you can cut your risk of these diseases by 30%, which is incredibly significant. I think that that's something that women too are very, very interested in. If you could reduce your risk of breast cancer by a 1/3<sup>rd</sup>, I think that's pretty impressive.

Again, as I said earlier, the other thing about that is that if you are getting yourself into a healthy lifestyle that decreases your chances of all kinds of disease. Of course we already know about heart disease. It certainly decreases your chances of heart disease. When talking specifically about cancer if you can get yourself into that mode, and so many women have. There are all kinds of studies that show that that translates into the next generation; and when we're talking about things like obesity, that's a very, very important point.

I think the reason that they believe that running for women is specifically significant in terms of cancer rate, especially breast cancer, is because estrogen is stored in fat cells; and estrogen is really a driver of breast cancer, and the more one runs, the more one reduces one's stored estrogen so that right there is quite a determining factor in terms of whether or not someone is going to come down with that disease. So again, all sorts of positive reinforcements there for women to get involved in running, and I think we're seeing that women are seeing that.

There are a couple of things that women need to really pay attention to when they're running in terms of their health and fitness, and that's their level of calcium and their level of iron. Those are things that women really need to stay up on. I think your body generally tells you that; but beyond that obviously, we all know that running burns lots of calories. I don't know a woman in the world mostly that's not interested in that. More than any other activity, if you run fast, you burn a lot; and if you run slow, you still burn more than you burn doing just about anything else.

We all have different experiences; but if you want to be fast, there are certainly things you can do to get faster. But, for most of us, just being out there and getting it done,

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whether it's everyday or a few times a week, it increases our overall wellness tremendously. I'd be glad to take some questions about any of the issues in terms of breast cancer or any questions about that. I think that's an important issue when it comes to women and running. So if anybody wants to talk about the health issues, I'm glad to do that. I don't pretend that I'm a health expert, but I certainly over the years have learned a whole lot about health and running.

I think in terms of overall stress level, that's another thing that I want to bring out before we break it down to questions. The other major factor, and I don't know if there's any way to really quantify this, but I don't know of any health expert that really disagrees with this anymore that stress is a huge factor for disease of any kind, whether it's cancer or anything else. Running simply decreases stress on the body. I mean, it may feel stressful while you're running; but it certainly decreases stress on the body and helps outlook, and in that way I think reduces inflammation and all sorts of other things that can be cause for disease.

So why don't we open it up for questions on that, if we'd like to do that.

**Bennett Cohen:** Okay, let's do that. To ask a question, please press star 6 and you'll be placed in the Q&A cue. If there's anyone with a question, please press star 6. Okay, one question, okay, go ahead please.

**Sandy:** Oh hi, it's Sandy from Toronto again.

**Donna Deegan:** Hi Sandy

**Sandy:** Hi there.

**Donna Deegan:** Sandy, we have a lot of folks that come down from Toronto for the race by the way, so I hope you'll make plans to come down and join us. I love my Canadians; they're the best. They're so much fun.

**Sandy:** Excellent. I'd love to come down one time. In the meantime, just curious, there's an awful lot of focus on the health benefits for running and very little focus on the benefits for things like self-esteem and how we view ourselves as women, which is such a big issue I think particularly among I would say younger women and women who are coming into their 20s and trying to figure out what to do with their lives and whatnot. Are you aware of any programs, or is that an aspect that you consider in developing young runners or developing your fund raising and your communications to address something like that?

**Donna Deegan:** Well, if you go all the way back to grade school and high school, the girls that are involved in sports, the girls that are involved in keeping themselves physically active, are the ones who tend to have the best self-esteem. I think there's very little question about that, so I really honestly think that one feeds the other. I think

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that becoming a physically fit person from the time that you are a child, and I wish I had done this earlier in my life; I wish I hadn't waited until after I had my second child to start running. I think if you can get young women involved in running, and that's one of the things that we do, and I talk more about that, then I think you have a much greater chance of influencing their self-esteem.

There is nothing that improves self-esteem like physical activity. There just isn't. It releases enzymes in the brain that cause you to feel better about yourself. Your physical fitness makes you feel better about yourself, just that whole level of confidence in terms of what you can do physically. There's an amazing difference with young girls who start to run. So what we've done in terms of our marathon, and I know that there are a lot of programs out there now trying to get younger people to start running, is we've started something we call the Danny Brown challenge.

That actually was named after my high school track coach who was just an amazing person in terms of building self-esteem in young people and doing it through teaching them that pushing your body and bringing your body to a point that you didn't really think you could get to could be an amazing enlightenment. We started something called the Danny Brown challenge in our race, which basically encourages high school kids; and it's not a race. It's a relay. We just ask them to join up, and they take part in our relay program, which basically is each person in our relay runs five miles and the last person runs 6.2. We try to get them to run it, to walk it, or whatever they can do to get out there and get their bodies moving because that is such a large deterrent factor in self-esteem.

I also think that the whole idea of a group running is extremely appealing to women and I think also is a great self-esteem builder. There's nothing like completing a 20-mile run and knowing you still have gas left in the tank. I think that's an enormous way through our group training that we do help to develop self-esteem.

So I don't think that you need a self-esteem program. I think for most people once you realize the potential that is within your body, it's a great way to build that. I know for me it's enormous in maintaining my outlook, which I think is such a huge part of staying healthy, and I think it is for a lot of women. I tell them that every day that I talk to who have dealt with breast cancer.

Outlook is everything, it's so important and such a big part, and it's so much easier to have a good outlook if you feel physically good. People can try to come up with every short cut on the planet, but, and believe me, in my job as a news anchor, I hear about the latest, greatest fad diet every single day that is going to help you to avoid exercise. While I'm supposed to stay neutral, it's probably the one topic that I tend to hop in and say guys, you know you can try to get around it every way you can; but the bottom line is if you don't get out and move your body, you're not going to be a healthier individual, not overall, and it's health that develops a positive view of oneself.

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So yes, I hope that answers your question; but I don't know what other types of self-esteem development that you're talking about, but I'd certainly be interested in hearing any ideas that you have about that.

**Linda:** No, I'm not aware actually of any programs here; but I know that an awful lot of races focus on having like the little kids runs, but it really skips over the teen years. I'm pleased to hear that you have something that really reaches out to that group of kids because I think they get kind of lost in the shuffle. That's really when they need, particularly for women, need to have some reinforcements to find that they have their own strength and that they can pull up from deep inside themselves instead of relying on so many other things that we tend to rely on.

**Donna Deegan:** Well, that's it. I mean, I completely agree with that; and I mean, I have a teenage daughter, and I've always really insisted that she be physically fit. Sometimes you get pushed back about that when they're teenagers, but she was always involved in sports. So for her running, at least initially was really not a pleasant thing because she always had to run wind sprints. Now she enjoys getting out there and just running a mile a two and just what it does for her whole mental outlook because I think as much as physically, mentally running is one of those things that can really clear the head.

**Linda:** Oh, I agree.

**Donna Deegan:** So I totally am with you on that. We actually have a number of programs here in our area that are geared toward children and young adults, and we thought that it was important to add the one for the marathon. Specifically to me, I mean, I know that because I had those health challenges and now that I see the research that says my goodness, I could help my daughter reduce her chances of having something like that happen to her by up to 80%, I mean, I just don't know where the downside is; and so the more we can encourage young people from a younger age to try to tone their bodies and their minds, I just think it's a huge win all the way around.

I don't think that it can be understated how important it is to the future of our kids to have them physically fit. I mean, you look at the obesity rates now; and there are 40% of us are going that way now. I mean, it's sort of crazy when you think about it; and if you don't get to the kids, it's really much tougher to get to people once I say what if the house is on fire, it's much more difficult to focus on putting it out. I mean, you want to get to them when they're young, and I'm pleased that we're doing that. I'd like to actually develop more programs that way. We do have a kids run in addition to that.

I love those programs that are things like the kids marathons where the kids have to run a mile a week leading up to 26 miles. We have one of those programs in our city as well, just to get them used to doing that; and then they get that great positive reinforcement of getting the medal at the end. We all love the playing, right; I mean, whether we love to get them often or not, that's always a good incentive to get through the runs. I couldn't agree with you more, could not agree with you more on that.

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**Linda:** If you keep encouraging the young ladies to get out and run, and maybe that will get my young guys out running to chase them.

**Donna Deegan:** Well, that's it; there's nothing that will get a guy running faster than a girl that runs faster than him, no question about that. Do you have children also?

**Linda:** I do have two teenage boys and they live the man cave, and it's very challenging to get them out. Of course, they won't run with me because I can kick their ass, so now it's gone too far; and so it's hard to reach back and retrieve them.

**Donna Deegan:** You're right about that, and I have a teenage boy also; and he runs, but the only time that we ever got into close to a really horribly uncomfortable situation with each other in terms of on a very base level was when I beat him running one day when he was a few years younger. I don't think I could do it now, but he was in tears. He was very upset because he was very competitive, and he got very upset that I beat him. I don't think he still would like to run with me, but I'm sure he could beat me today.

My daughter just enjoys getting out there, but I think that's the difference in the mentality; I really do. Although I will say that the men who run our race, a lot of them have a lot of fun with it. Many of them have an association with somebody who's had breast cancer; or at least if it's not a wife or a daughter, it's often another worker, but they'd come out there with a little bit of a different perspective than a lot of the guys that you might think, they come out very appreciative as well and very connected to the whole idea of doing it for a cause.

I've sort of gotten off topic now, but I really do like the idea of everybody doing it together. I just think women bring a lot to this sport, and I think we have a lot to teach our male counterparts in terms of the best way to approach it. Whether we ever succeed or not, I don't know.

**Linda:** Thank you very much.

**Donna Deegan:** Thank you, anybody else?

**Bennett Cohen:** Sure, let's go to the next question please, just a moment. Okay, caller whose number ends in 4329, please go ahead.

**Darlene:** Hi, this is Darlene; and I'm from Virginia Beach and I've been

**Donna Deegan:** Hi Darlene.

**Darlene:** Hi, how are you?

**Donna Deegan:** Great

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**Darlene:** I run with the Galloway team here in Southampton Roads area, and it's great because it's, you know, the social aspects of it; and it does make running the 20-mile a lot easier when you have a group to run with and talk with and share different things with, you what works for them and what works for you and also to plan races together. A lot of our runners are women. We do have some men, but most of them are women. So it's nice to be able to get together, run, share stories about families, and things like that.

We meet once a week, and actually we meet during the week too for hill training. We're very flat here too in Virginia Beach, and we then [inaudible 45:56] last year, and it was just phenomenal. I thought it was great. It was very rewarding to see some of the breast cancer survivors out there running too, and so it was really a great experience.

**Donna Deegan:** Well thank you Darlene, I appreciate that; and I love the fact that you run with the Galloway program. Could you share from your perspective why to you, for women especially, the whole run, walk, run thing is a great thing?

**Darlene:** We could try to run the whole thing, but it's much better as far as recovery time to do the run/walk; and it's not faster. You get there just as fast or faster because you're not putting that strain on your body. You're giving your muscles a chance to recover and then continue to run, recover, and continue to run; and you go through that pattern. People are at different levels so they go at different run rates, one run/walk rate.

**Donna Deegan:** Right, everybody breaks down into their own pacing group. If you run a five-minute mile, you run with the folks who run a five-minute mile and so on.

**Darlene:** Exactly. The next day you're not sore and regretting running the ten-mile or so. So the recovery is really important to me and also that it make it not so much a chore. It's more enjoyable because you're not.

**Donna Deegan:** Well, I think that's a great point Darlene because I can say that, and that's part of the technique, that it's not that you're taking a break because you're still getting with it pretty good when you're taking those short walk breaks through your runs. You've got to first of all shed yourself of the idea that it's a sissy thing to put in walk breaks, and I'm happy to say all the guys that run with us now have gotten their arms around that because now they're faster. What you're actually doing is you're allowing your muscle tissue, you're changing up the muscle so you're allowing that muscle to recover.

So how does that translate? Well, by the time you get to mile 20 in a marathon where everybody else is cramping up that went by you, you're still smoking along because you haven't overtaxed your muscles. I think it's such a great thing, specifically for women, because there are so many masters women involved in this sport now, so many. I mean, and it's a wonderful way to stay injury free and really almost do as many

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marathons as you want to because your body just really accepts it so much more easily. Don't you find that to be the case?

**Darlene:** Yes I do. It's so much more enjoyable. You're not sore for the next week and having to put off continuing to train. You can train right away, and the next day or two you can start running again and continue with your training so you don't lose out on everything that you've built up.

**Donna Deegan:** Plus the thing is most of the women I know have pretty active lives. So you really don't want to feel like crud after you've done a long run, and you really want to be able to do something that can allow you to get your miles in and go on with the rest of your life and chase your kids and do your job and whatever else it is that you want to do. I think the biggest hurdle for a lot of folks is getting over the whole notion that there's something wrong in walking.

Once you see that your health is improved, your time has improved, that you're not injured five times during your training, you snap on the fact that that's a pretty cool way to train. Like you said, for women specifically, what's so great about it is the whole social aspect. I think the Galloway groups are just amazing that way. It's funny; I say the women, we finished our 20-mile training run last week; and the first thing that one of the guys said to me when he came in and he was panting, and I said how was it, and he said great, but of course we wore ourselves out talking. I think they enjoy it very much too, but the whole social aspect of the Galloway training group to me is fantastic.

I have to say that I come to that as a person who truly was a very solitary runner and loved that about running, and still most of my runs during the week are by myself. I really thought when Jeff first approached me about training people for the marathon, I thought gosh, do I really want to be around other humans that much while I'm running. Running is my time to sort of get out and get into my own head and sort of float out there. Do I really want to do that, and my husband is the same way. We just absolutely fell in love with it because I mean those people have now become some of best life friends. Our closest friends really are the people that we run with, and that's a pretty neat thing to be able to say.

**Linda:** Yes, you create these lasting friendships; and we actually even get together, like once a month we meet at a restaurant and we share. You know, people are doing different races so they will bring in their medals and things like that and share their stories. So it's a lot of fun and we inspire each other to continue with whatever goal you have set for yourself. It's a great support group.

**Donna Deegan:** Absolutely. Well thanks for sharing that. I'm glad that somebody from one of the Galloway groups called in because I'm such a huge believer in the program. I can tell you when I travel around to different expos around the country, and I see Jeff. The line of women that waits to greet him is so fun to watch, and to see the tears in their eyes. So many of them are saying you completely changed my life. I never thought this

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was something that I could do, and now I can do it with regularity. It goes back to the whole issue of you feeling good about your life and yourself. It's a wonderful way to feel and do that. So thank you for sharing that. I hope you'll come down and visit us again.

**Linda:** I don't think I could have run a full marathon without that kind of training and the support, you know, just that whole encouragement to continue with the training.

**Donna Deegan:** Well, you know it's interesting that you point that out because Jeff is fond of...and I know Jeff is going to speak later in the week, which is great; but he points out that when people start out to train for a marathon by themselves, the very first effort if you train by yourself, 4% of people will actually complete the training and do the marathon. That's if you start out for the first time by yourself and do it by yourself; but if you train with a group such as the way we do, 98% complete the entire race.

Now that's a pretty impressive statistic, and I think so much of that is the social aspect of it. Maybe even a little bit of the guilt of okay, my friends are there waiting for me, and I don't want to let them down; I'm going to show up. So if you know you have all these people who are waiting for you. For me, guilt works every time; so I'm good for that. So I just think it's a great way to connect with people.

**Linda:** It is and I know you were talking about nutrition too earlier, and I was wondering if you have any tips for...I'm gluten intolerant so I've changed around what I eat, but it makes it a little challenging

**Donna Deegan:** Well Darlene, let me tell you, I'm glad you brought that up because I didn't know if people were going to be particularly interested in hearing about nutrition today. I will tell you that for me, that has changed my world; and after I was diagnosed for the third time with breast cancer, I decided I'm going to completely change what I'm doing. I went to see a doctor who specializes in nutrition and a holistic doctor to see what other types of things I could do to make my body less likely to accept disease.

The very first thing that was said to me was, and I'm not gluten intolerant; but the very first thing that was said to me was drop the gluten, drop the dairy, and that's what I did. It's made a tremendous difference in the way I feel, and I've been in wonderful health now for several years. I'll tell you the reason that's a big deal, and you probably already know this as somebody who's gluten intolerant; but inflammation of the body is the cause of disease.

Many of us, in fact 85%, have some sort of either gluten intolerance or dairy intolerance and we don't know it. We look at it and we think okay, I've got a seasonal allergy or my stomach just doesn't feel quite right or I feel sort of sluggish, but I don't know why. So much of that is tied to diet. So I absolutely eat gluten- and dairy free, and I would say to you that the more you do it, and I don't know how long you've been doing it, it really becomes less and less of a challenge because what happens is just like with running is

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that you get that instant feedback from your body saying you know what? I feel better. So you crave less and less of those foods.

I thought how am I going to live without regular bread? How am I going to live without cheese? I don't even miss that stuff. There is so much available now in gluten-free products. I mean, quinoa pasta; and if you want to make sure you keep pasta in your diet, but I found a diet for me that is very, very highly concentrated in vegetables with some lean fishes and grass-fed beef, and things like that works really well for me. As a runner, I get the protein that I need, I get the carbohydrates I need, and I don't eat a lot of simple carbohydrates.

I know there's a lot of...and again, I'm not a nutritionist; but I've certainly studied it a lot considering my situation and talked to too many who are runners. You really don't need all the simple carbohydrates that you take in on a regular basis; your body can be fueled very efficiently with a gluten- and dairy-free diet. You'll find that when you come out on the other end of it, you'll feel a whole lot more energetic. You really get out of it what you put into it. It's been tremendous for me. So hopefully, you have been able to find a good stash of gluten free. Have you found it difficult to find the things you can eat?

**Linda:** It's gotten easier. It's been six months now, and I'm also dairy intolerant too. So it's just been challenging to kind of stay the course, but I do feel a lot better. My running has actually improved.

**Donna Deegan:** Oh, I'm sure.

**Linda:** Yes, a great deal and I feel a lot better; and if I do eat something that I shouldn't, I feel it right away too.

**Donna Deegan:** Well, I think you're going to find that your overall health is going to feel so much better that the more you get that feedback, the more you're not going to care about the other stuff. The other thing I would say to try to limit at least, if not cut out entirely, is sugar. It's a drag on the body in all sorts of ways; and certainly as somebody who is concerned about cancer risk, it's something you'd want to look at. I can't say I've gone completely sugar free, but I certainly have cut a great deal of sugar out of my diet.

I juice every day, which is another thing that I never did before. I'm sitting in front of a big huge glass of green juice. I have a juicer at home and I take every green thing I can find and I throw it in there and I drink it. It revs up my metabolism and makes me feel great. So I think it's a big part of staying healthy and making your running more satisfying having a good diet. I think a lot of times when we're runners, we come up with a lot of great excuses for eating a lot of stuff we probably don't need to eat, but simple carbohydrates are really not a great way to go.

So just keep looking. I shop at a store that primarily has gluten- and dairy-free things, but you can find them. I mean, even your garden variety grocery stores now generally

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have a fairly large gluten-free section because it's become so popular. So I would encourage you to continue to go that route.

**Linda:** Yes, thank you very much.

**Donna Deegan:** Thank you very much.

**Bennett Cohen:** Okay, thank you. We'd like to get to the next caller, just a moment. Okay, go ahead please.

**Beth:** Hi Donna, it's Beth from LA. How are you?

**Donna Deegan:** Hi Beth, how are you?

**Beth:** I'm doing great. I had my morning run this morning, and I'm feeling fantastic.

**Donna Deegan:** It's still early there.

**Beth:** Well, not too early; we're almost at 10:00 o'clock here. Listen, I wanted to...is Sandy by the way, if Sandy is still listening from Toronto, she asked a question about getting young people involved, specifically girls. There's an organization called Girls On the Run that I just wanted to

**Donna Deegan:** Wonderful.

**Beth:** It is really fantastic. Yes, they do amazing work in the communities with young women in getting them started into exercise programs and do a lot of work around self-esteem. So I just wanted to mention that.

I actually wanted to ask you a question on behalf of one of my community members who wasn't able to join us because of her work schedule. I wanted to just ask you, you started out on at the teleconference about talking about how you started your organization. Originally, she is trying to raise money for a family member who has been diagnosed with [inaudible glitch in tape 59:12] cancer.

Specifically, I was wondering if you had any advice or if you had any information about support systems for people who are trying to raise money for a very specific cause and what you might suggest? I know you said that you started out just kind of selling T-shirts and trying to get people to run with you, that sort of thing. Do you know of any organizations, maybe people, where you can sort of plug something into a fund-raising website, or something of that nature that could help her get going in her community to help her personal situation?

**Donna Deegan:** So she doesn't want to start a foundation per se; she just wants to raise money for a personal situation?

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**Beth:** Exactly.

**Donna Deegan:** I don't know of anything in particular; but I will say that the fastest, what we have seen, the fastest growth with everything; and right now I know you probably know what I'm going to say -- a social media. I mean, there are ways to plug into that and raise money for a cause on social media, but also spread your message in an exponential way. That I would say would be my first piece of advice. I mean, for me I probably had an easier time than most just because like I said, I've sort of had the broadcast mega phone here; but I also really connected with a lot of women to start off with.

So in terms of just trying to help somebody in particular, you might want to try and see if you can find a broadcast partner who would be interested in helping that way. I know that we do that a lot of times here is if somebody has a particular instance of a situation where they're having a difficult time, they'll approach us at the television station to put together a report about that; and often we will. Then it comes down to creating whatever vehicle you want to go from there, whether it's just a bank account where you want people to donate or whether it's a specific community organization that you want to partner with in order to raise money for this individual; but those would be my advice.

I don't know what specific situation this is; but you know, I think the more that you can legitimize yourself in terms of connecting with a group that already does this sort of thing is probably going to be the best because otherwise people aren't really sure about where they're giving their money.

**Beth:** Yes, that's always the concern obviously; and obviously she's a runner, and she's going the route of paying per mile or something of that nature that's very good for fund raising.

**Donna Deegan:** Yes, go to your local running store. I mean, that the very first people I talked to when I started this whole thing was I went to my local running 1st Place Sports here in Jacksonville that sponsors so many races; and I said how do I start doing this? They gave me great advice, and they might be a great community partner. I mean, that might be a great way to start.

**Beth:** Alright, that's an awesome idea, thank you.

**Donna Deegan:** And I'm so glad you mentioned the Girls On the Run; I was remiss in not mentioning them. We love them. I have participated with them for years and love them as an organization and their girls also participate in getting folks out to our race and taking part. So it's wonderful to have that group out there because it's probably the only group that I know of nationwide that geared completely towards getting girls into the sport of running. So I think that's a wonderful idea.

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**Beth:** Yes, cool, thank you so much.

**Donna Deegan:** Thank you so much for calling.

**Bennett Cohen:** Okay. Donna, we have a couple of more minutes. Is there anything that you would like to say in rapping up?

**Donna Deegan:** Really just love the opportunity to connect with other women as always and would really love to encourage everybody to come down and visit us in Jacksonville Beach. Our race is February 13<sup>th</sup>. We're right around Presidents Day weekend every year. We even have a wonderful portion of our race that's right along the ocean right on the sand. We have very hard-packed sand here, and so we get people out through the soft sand with the support and then we put them on the beach for a couple of miles.

It's a great trip for girls, it's a great trip for families, and it's just a wonderful way to connect for a cause. So I hope people will come and join us in Jacksonville Beach. Please anybody who has a suggestion for anything that they would like to see us incorporate, I love some of the things that women said today. I'd love to hear from you. You can reach me at [breastcancermarathon.com](http://breastcancermarathon.com); and even as contact links can write to me so I get them, and I'd love to hear your suggestions on ways that we could make our races even more women-friendly.

**Bennett Cohen:** So that's next February 13<sup>th</sup>, and for more details to go to <http://www.breastcancermarathon.com/>. Well thank you very much Donna for sharing your wisdom and experience with us. I think we all have a greater appreciation of how women runners are truly changing, both not for profit, as well as also running industries too.

**Donna Deegan:** Well thank you Bennett, I really appreciate the opportunity.

**Bennett Cohen:** You're welcome, and it's a great race, and it's really for a most worthy cause. Everybody, please check it out.

Before we conclude the call today, we invite you to visit our resources and programs at the International Association of Women Runners website at <http://www.iawr-connect.com/> We offer customized training plans and coaching to help you run and race your best as a valuable member of the association. We help you achieve your goals for running, racing and a healthy lifestyle. You connect with a network of other women who share your passion for running; the association also provides you with cost savings on shoes, running gear, destination vacations, coaching and other products and services.

Not to sound like an infomercial, but this Friday is the last day to take advantage of our prelaunch membership special price of a \$107.00 per year. That's less than \$9.00 per month. After Friday, membership goes up to the regular price of \$137.00.

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We hope you enjoyed this call. Please join us for this evening's call at 8:00 pm with Sarah Stanley. Thanks for participating, and we hope to hear from you this evening.

[End of tape 1:05:26]