

## The End of Semiannual Inspiration Messages: 2013 Lessons and a Request to Pay It Forward

Greetings to family, friends, and colleagues around the world!

**With the advent of social media and after five years of messages, I am closing the semiannual inspiration series.** I have thoroughly enjoyed sharing in this forum with you.

But never fear if you want more! I regularly blog, tweet, and update LinkedIn with inspiration, and I regularly refer my network to inspiration posted by others in the social media space. So, please feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn, follow me on Twitter, or visit my blog, links to all of which can be found in my signature at the end of this note.

I would like to now close this series with your 2013 lessons and a request to pay it forward. Thank you to the handful of you who shared what is in your hearts and on your minds. Without further ado, here are the lessons, in alphabetical order by first name of the author!

### 2013 READER LESSONS

- **Finish what you start! It doesn't matter the obstacles in your way or how long it takes you... finish it!** I recently completed a sprint-distance triathlon. I am not incredibly athletic. I need to lose a few pounds. I hadn't been on a bicycle since about 1993. But last year I completed 2 Spartan Sprint obstacle course races, and I've always thought about how great a triathlon would be. Some of my cousins were discussing it and we decided to make it a family competition. My training began, and slowly over the months my cousins dropped out.... but I was determined to finish it. I bought a bike, which I fell off of a number of times (once was a dramatic tour de France-style crash). I rented a wetsuit, which didn't really fit well. I had my GU packets ready at the transition. Race day came and I felt confident that I was going to finish last, or close to last, coming in somewhere under 2 hours. The swim wasn't horrible, except that the ill-fitting wetsuit filled with water and I had to switch to breast stroke for about 1/2 of the distance. My transition was slow as I peeled the wetsuit off. I got on the bike and I was barely clipped into the pedals when I was confused by the course, hit some sand and went down. I was shaken up and bleeding and I dropped the chain on my bike, but I got up and quickly got back on. After riding for about 4 miles at what felt like a slow pace, I heard a noise. I had a flat front tire and no spare tubes (not that I would have known how to change the tire anyway). I got off the bike and with my hand pump, I inflated the tire. I got off the bike a total of 5 times to add air, watching everyone pass me. I wanted to cry and quit, but I was committed to finish. 13 miles felt like 26. As I finished the bike ride my friends and family took pictures of me, and I was smiling. The bike ride took double the time I thought it would and as I transitioned to the run I could hear them announcing the winners, and there I was, with 3.2 miles to run. I was cramping everywhere, but I put on my sneakers and headed out. I probably ended up walking about 2 of the 3 miles, but the volunteers kept cheering me on. One woman told me I was her hero and that if she had a flat tire she would have dropped out of the race. I was determined to finish. Crossing that finish line felt so good! I was smiling in all of the pictures. I almost couldn't believe I finished it. Initially, I figured I'd probably finish in like 1:50... but at least under 2 hours.... my final time was 2:44.38... dead last! But there were 7 people who didn't finish the race for one reason or another and I kept thinking of all of the people who were still sleeping when I finished. I told the race organizer that I'd be back again next year, hopefully with a more respectable time! Bottom line.... finish whatever it is that you start. That feeling of accomplishment will be well worth the struggle to get there! **Christina in Boston, MA USA**
- **Faith, positive attitude, and positive action will take you where you want to go.** I'm not referring to religious faith per se; rather faith in self and faith in the universe – that things will work out. My business is cyclical and can be feast or famine. In the middle of the summer I was at the end of a long and very scary drought. A mentor happened into my life who gave me the space to share my concerns and frustrations. After a while of talking he politely asked 'are we done admiring the problem'. And we started working on a very focused plan to change my actions and

improve my results. So far, the results have been tremendous. Now I'm only 2 months into a 6 month targeted effort to reach the biggest short term goal of my life. My pipeline is looking better than it has, and I have faith that business will get to where I need it to be for myself and for my family. The work that my mentor helped me on, which has proven invaluable, has been on focusing on positive action to change. This, tied with positive attitude and faith that I can achieve what I want, has made all the difference. **David in Allentown, PA USA**

- **Lose the "gee whiz"** This year, I've grown exponentially, and I don't mean my shoe size or pant length. I officially started an LLC, booked paid speaking gigs, published my writing via my profession's national association and got married to someone I love. This year, I really started tapping the potential that's always been there within me and did it my way. A mentor I admire greatly gave me a piece of advice that's sticking with me today. On a phone call in early 2013, just as we were ending the conversation, she asked me, "Kevin, can I give you one final piece of advice?" I'll never turn down free advice from someone I admire. "This is a little hard for me to say, but I think you gotta lose the 'gee whiz.' It's great that you're humble, but when you sound surprised that people honor you or invite you to speak, that's not going to work." It was honest, and she was right. Ever since then, I've taken myself more seriously while remaining humble and grateful. It's been sinking in all year long: I've got a lot to offer, and the fire ignited then has propelled me to do more and see more than I ever thought I could. **Kevin in Wayne, PA USA**

## CONCLUSION – A REQUEST TO PAY IT FORWARD

Thank you to all of our lesson authors. We appreciate that you took the time to reflect deeply on your lessons this year and lovingly share them with us.

**And now my request of you to pay it forward.** Just last week, someone in my network shared with me a blog post titled "60 Small Acts of Kindness that Will Make You an Everyday Hero" - <http://www.bradaronson.com/acts-of-kindness/>. All I ask is that you do one or more of these acts for your family, friends, and/or colleagues.

Who knows...maybe you'll begin your own series of semiannual inspiration messages?

Jon and I wish you a peaceful and prosperous new year, wherever you may find yourself in the world and on your journey. I hope you'll stay connected and continue to invest in your own community every day.

Regards,

**Brian Fishbone**

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*Have you invested in your community today?*

PS - Previous semiannual inspirational messages dating back to June 2008 can be found at <http://brianfishbone.typepad.com/becoming-the-blog/semiannual-inspirational-messages.html>.