



If I had run that way. . . .

I learned an important lesson from a time when my father was in high school. There was a Boy Scout track meet and the Scout leader had entered my dad in the one mile race. He had never run a mile in his life. Bill was another guy in the troop and had run on the school track team. He showed up with the special shoes and fancy running gear. He hoped to win the race. Dad wore sneakers and shorts. But dad had a plan—find a fellow who was going about the same speed, stick with him for 3 laps, and then give it everything he had on the fourth lap.

And that's what he did. While Bill and a small cluster of fellows jockeyed for a position out front, dad and his hand-picked adversary struggled along at the back of the pack—weary, yet pursuing. As they started the last lap, dad kicked into a higher gear and gave it everything left in the tank. The other fellow pulled ahead any way and left dad in his dust.

When my father finally crossed the line in last place, he crumpled in a heap on the infield and gasped for breath. He lay panting in agony. He had never been that exhausted in his life. Everything hurt.

Bill had finished right near the front. When he saw dad in such agony, he came over and said, "Jake, you've got to get up and walk it off."

"I can't. I can't. I can't get up," Dad gasped.

"You have to get up and walk around or you'll feel terrible tomorrow."

"I feel terrible right now."

Then Bill said something to my dad I'll never forget. He said, "Jake, if I had run like that—I would have won!"

Great teaching also starts with a decision to do my best.