

Existential Thoughts from a First Marathon

By PR Diva Marion Blackburn

The Medoc Marathon, at Medoc Mountain State Park, was voted by participants as the Best Trail Event for Endurance Magazine. They will also tell you it is one of the most difficult. It is directed by the wonderful folks at Rocky Mount Endurance Club.

The Day Before

Chocolate chip cookies are great pre-marathon food.

Race Day

3:30 a.m. I'm sure I'll feel better once I get up.

4 a.m. This coffee tastes good.

5:30 a.m. Why are we taking U.S. 64? I usually take N.C. 33.

6:30 a.m. We made it to Medoc. Blue shirts this year -- awesome!!

7 a.m. Let's get a picture with Medoc Man.

7:45 a.m. Only 15 more minutes.

8 a.m. / Mile 0 -- I'm running my first marathon!!

Mile 1 – Yeah!! The first mile of my first marathon!!

Mile 2 – This trail sure is beautiful.

Mile 3 – Rocks. But I think the dew is holding them in place.

Mile 3 ½ -- Look at the sun through the leaves. Everything is sparkling.

Mile 4 – There's the dam!!

Mile 5 – Hmm. 21 miles to go. I need a bathroom.

Mile 6 – I didn't know it was all uphill.

Mile 7 – Yeah!! Only teens to go.

Mile 8 – What a great run. I'm not going to walk a single step.

Mile 9 – More uphill?

Mile 10 – Ruins from the old Boy Scout hut. Wouldn't that be an interesting archaeology site.

Mile 11 – THIS IS THE GREATEST RUN EVER. I LOVE THIS RACE!! You are the most wonderful volunteers!! There's the bathroom!! Thank you so much!!

Mile 12 – I can't wait to register for next year!!

Mile 12 ½ – [long conversation with my departed Grandmother]

Mile 13 – Cool. I didn't see this coming ... but I feel changed inside.

Mile 14 – La la la la la

Mile 15 – Hmmmm. Why does everything hurt.

Mile 16 – Only 10 more miles!!

Mile 16 ½ – I never want to run again.

Mile 17 – Be like a horse. Just run.

Mile 17 ½ -- Hello turtle on a rock.

Mile 18 – [nervous breakdown]

Mile 19 – I am a failure [crying].

Mile 19 ½ -- Hello little toad on the trail.

Mile 20 – Six more miles? That's just a 10K.

Mile 20 ½ -- Hello cricket on the trail.

Mile 21 – A MIRACLE!! My feet don't hurt. My legs are numb. THIS IS A GREAT RUN.

Mile 21 ½ – [Buddhist enlightenment] I have no thoughts or desires. The wind rustles the trees.

Mile 22 – Nietzsche was right -- human will can do anything. I am alone on this trail with my will -- I can do it.

Mile 22 ½ -- How can this trail be completely vertical?

Mile 23 – Only three more miles? I can quit now. Really. 23 miles is practically the whole thing.

Mile 24 – I can do this... no I can't ... yes I can ... just run ... [crying]

Mile 25.2 – ONE MORE MILE. No matter what bruises, bleeds or breaks, I am going to run with dignity and poise.

Mile 26.2 (the finish line) – Wow. The race volunteers and organizers are here!! And smiling kids are waving at me. I love them!! I love everybody!!

There's the finish line. Thank you, thank you!! Can I hug you all?

Is this my Finisher's Surprise? I LOVE THIS HAT!! It says, "Marathon Finisher." Thank you so much. That was the best run ever.

Epilogue -- I finished last – yes, last – but really, that's the same as first from another point of view. And I can't wait to do it again next year.