



**Sweaty She Monday (6/29/09):
Get Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable**

By Susan Farago

Weekly Sweaty She postings can be found on "Sweaty She" on Facebook.com.

There is an expression that says, "When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." Or in the case of my husband Leary – an auto mechanic through high school and college – when all you know is automotive chemicals, that's what you use to take care of any problem around the house. The time we had an apartment cockroach infestation (thanks to the people who moved in below us), Leary hermetically sealed all the pipes and outlet cracks leading to our apartment with expanda-foam gasket maker stuff. And it worked. But the more recent ant infestation was not resolved with carburetor cleaner.

The point is that when we know and are comfortable with certain things, we tend to come at new challenges with the tools we have. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. It makes complete sense from a problem solving standpoint. And it's how many of our belief systems have come into existence.

Now apply this to your sports and training.

We embrace the things we are good at and cringe at the things we are not good at. For me? I'm game for hill repeats on the bike any day! But talk to me about doing track workouts and my first response is, "Can I bring my bike?"

Also known as "change management", business gurus have developed methodologies for explaining this phenomenon by ways of telling us it's OK if someone has moved our cheese and helping us to discover the color of our parachutes. Take it one step further into chaos theory which explores the possibility of getting completely random results from normal equations and finding order in what appears to be completely random data. Welcome to my mood swings once a month!!

So how do we develop new skills and knowledge to help us be comfortable with the uncomfortable? Get used to being uncomfortable! Some ideas include:

1. Do something different with your training.
Find a park and do cartwheels for 15 minutes. Take boxing lessons. Trail run at night. Swim in the lake at night. Find a parking ramp and do stair repeats. The possibilities are endless so be creative to get your body and brain moving in a different direction.
2. Don't over-think it.

If you spend more than a week thinking about taking action and you don't take action, you're over-thinking it. Just do it. Need help? Recruit a Sweaty She!!

3. Learn to think on your feet.

Have plan A, B, C and when all plans fail, toss them out the window and improvise. Better yet, start something without a plan and see where it goes. Put yourself in a different situation (see #1 above) and learn to deal with what happens.

4. Expect the best, enjoy, and laugh.

Don't assume things will turn out for the worst. Be prepared to actually have fun and laugh! Some of my best and funniest memories have come from new experiences and I love stories that start out with, "Remember the time we had the bright idea to ..."

5. Share the experience.

If you have a friend who does a different sport or activity than you, swap sports! You do hers for a day and vice versa. Or get a group of friends together for coffee and brainstorm new activities for everyone to try. The last time I did this with my friends, we came up with a plan to do a 10K Burrow Race (you actually run a 10K with a burrow). Do I know anything about burrows? Heck no. Tentative race is June, 2010. Thanks Laurie A. for that idea!!

Eleanor Roosevelt had it right when she said, "Do one thing every day that scares you." No one is stopping you but you. So get out there and be scared! And if it makes you feel better, bring a can of carburetor cleaner...just in case.

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