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Two-Minute Drill



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Feet Don't Fail Me Now

Gary is a friend who at age 63 is planning to run his first marathon. He said to me, "I need you to stand at mile 22 and cheer me on. This is when I will most want to quit the race: four miles from the finish line. My mind will tell my body that 22 miles is good enough and that finishing the race won't matter."

In Homer's *The Odyssey*, Odysseus spends 10 years on an epic journey back to his home island of Ithaca. Despite his desire to return to his throne and reunite with his queen Penelope, Odysseus keeps being turned off course by ill winds, blown back and forth on the sea often to the direction he has already come from.

At one point he finds himself on the island of Aeolus, the king of winds who gives Odysseus a bag of wind so that nothing can blow him off course. But just off the shores of Ithaca, in sight of their families and villages, Odysseus' men open Aeolus' bag releasing the wind and blowing their ship back across the sea, once again far from home.

Why is it that we often lose our discipline, resilience and optimism as we get closest to our goal? Gary strikes me as very wise: he recognizes he will be tempted to "give up" on his goal of completing a marathon when success is literally just around the bend. He knows his mind will open the "bag" that will unleash predatory doubts and indecision. So, he is not afraid to ask for support and look for ways to buttress his own considerable fortitude.

Ask yourself:

What challenges am I facing in my life that I need more support?

Where am I going to find this support? How do I ask for it?

Is asking for help and support a signal of weakness or a sign of wisdom?

What is the difference in staying persistent versus just being obstinate?

Consider the words of Einstein: "Many of the great achievements of the world were accomplished by tired and discouraged men who kept on working."