

Appendix A

Interview with Lizzy Kemp Salvato

1. What type of sport had you participated in before racewalking?

I did not engage in sport or exercise aside from a few aerobic classes before starting racewalking.

2. What were your motives to begin racewalking?

A friend invited me to come along with a group of racewalkers that met every Monday-Wednesday-Friday night and Sunday mornings in Balboa Park, San Diego, California. I wanted to lose weight and it turned into a social thing. My parents had just divorced and older siblings had moved out of the home, so I was at loose ends and this filled a void in my life.

3. Do you feel you had a natural talent for this sport?

When I joined the group the other racewalkers told me that I should be good because I have long legs; they kept on saying “you’re going to be good at this,” and that positive feedback gave me the motivation to keep up with the sport.

4. You first joined a group of racewalkers, then trained by yourself; can you tell me about that experience?

This was a group of about 5 or 6 men and another woman, all over the age of 40. When I trained on my own the first few times my shins burned so much I almost quit, but the social aspects of the group kept me going. I started for the exercises and stayed for the social group – these men and woman became my mentors. I could talk about my life and they would give me advice on how to change majors or drop a class or handle life in general.

The group was right, I was a natural for this sport and soon became too fast for them and started to train on my own for the Olympic trials – that is when it turned from fun to work, and I wasn’t as happy – I had a lot of fear of being disqualified, frustration, and pressure to be fast. I was self-coached so I only had myself to rely on. I did not make the Olympic team came in 10th in the trials. Considering that I had just started the sport I felt cool to have even made the trials. I took a break from racewalking, and ran and lifted weights. I got into cycling–first tandem, then on my own. Met my husband cycling, and we began to run marathons and triathlons.

Racewalking gave me the confidence (self-efficacy) that translated to other sports, and I felt I could try anything and have control over my body.

5. Can you tell me what athletic achievement you are most proud of?

The Olympic trials were cool, but I am most proud of setting the world record in my class (junior) for the racewalking 100 miles in under 24 hours.

I had gone to pace my friend Dale Sutton, and for the first 50 miles, with no intention of walking the full 100 miles. This was on a track, and I sat down and put my feet up after the first 50 miles and had some soup. Dale took another lap and came over to ask if I was tired, and I said I felt fine, so he encouraged me to continue. I was 19, didn't have a trainer, coach, psychologist, massage therapist, et cetera, to help me, but I kept going. Soon many of the elite world class walkers were dropping out and their trainers started to notice me and began clocking my laps. The coaches realized that I was setting a pace to set a record, and they started handing me food, drinks, and offering help. When it was over I was crying with joy that it was over, I was exhausted and happy that I had set a record.

6. There is precious little written about walking a marathon, including racewalking a marathon. I would like to hear what you have to say about this subject.

So many people would be better off walking than running because running is so hard on the joints and most people do not have the physiology to run. That is the reason there are so many injuries with running.

7. What has been your experience in training others to walk a marathon?

I used to see someone overweight take on the challenge of walking a marathon and not believe that they could do it. But so many of these people surprised me with their ability to finish that I now have the confidence to encourage and motivate others, letting them know that if they keep with the schedule of homework, show up for all the long walks and all of the other training, they will finish the marathon.

For people just starting out I would encourage them to set smaller goals like a 10k, and progress to a ½ marathon, and use these as stepping stones to a full marathon.

8. What are your thoughts about motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic?

I think that many of the people that join "Team In Training" or similar programs need the extrinsic motivation to accomplish their goals. They need to hear that they can do it and that they look good, and be validated for their efforts. The reinforcement and handholding is why they seek a group in the first place.

9. What are your thoughts about finding someone with a real talent for racewalking?

1

There seems to be a shining star in every program –generally a woman in her early 40's that was never an athlete but had an athletic build and capacity that was never used – they find that they are good at this, and they take it on as their identity, and become consumed with it, changing their diet, activity level and self-concept. This is for them, not their husband or kids; it is about who she is.

10. What are your thoughts about the increase in marathon walking by people who until that time would never consider themselves capable of being considered an athlete?

Back in 1982 either you ran a marathon or nothing. There was no such thing as fitness walking. Back then racewalkers had to crash running events and no thought was given to their needs. Once the last runner finished, the cones were taken in and the aid stations were closed. I once wound up walking a full marathon instead of ½ because I took a wrong turn on a course that was closed and walked an extra 13 miles. But the race directors saw how they could make money off of the masses, noticed the fundraising events brought out many more people, and they started to make the races more walker friendly – extending the time limits and encouraging walkers to sign up and pay the entry fees.

11. Do you consider walkers athletes?

Yes, as long as they train, set goals, and push themselves, they are athletes.

12. One reason I began this research is that during my own training to walk a marathon I found a lack of understanding by the general public as to what it takes to walk a marathon as opposed to running, and a basic lack of respect for walkers. Have you run into this same prejudice?

Yes, there is the perception that a walker is someone who is a wimp, not an athlete, but the walker has to be an athlete to finish a marathon due to the length of time out on the course, they have more blister problems, lower back pain, and stiffness in joints. The walker has to be sure to eat and drink enough to keep going.

13. How has walking affected your self efficacy? Of those you train?

I feel I can tackle almost anything. I have a strong body and I am a better mother and wife because of it. I can keep up with the kids boogie boarding, hiking, et cetera, and be a activity partner with my husband now and later on in life. Also it helps me keep my body running smoothly. I see my walkers become less shy and more confident.

14. What performance goals do you train your walkers to set?

I ask them to set higher expectations. Figure out your pace and set your goal a bit faster. Walk with a faster partner, push yourself, and get out of your comfort zone. As long as you are putting in the hours to train, make the most of it and burn as many calories as you can.

15. My hypothesis is that there is a difference in performance goals between runners and walkers. What do you think?

Runners are mostly “A” personality types, and have a lot of ego involved. They have a set time they want to make or beat. Most walkers start the program with the goal of finishing and don’t think about time till very close to the actual race – and then it would be nice to finish by a certain time, but finishing is the goal.

16. My null hypothesis is that there will be no significant difference between runners and walkers as far as motivation and self-efficacy. Would you agree?

Yes I agree, the motivation and self-efficacy will probably be similar.