

... Ergo Sum

by Dr. Daniel Shaye, Chiropractic Physician



Do you exist?

It seems an odd question, but it's an ancient one. French mathematician-philosopher René Descartes pondered this question, and decided that since he could think, he must exist. "Cogito, ergo sum" he declared.

What do you declare?

On a recent Sunday, I pondered this question as I watched a YouTube video of a competitive cross-country race (yes, sandwiched between my own runs, I sometimes watch other people run). The power and intensity and speed of these athletes thrilled me... as did the size of the pack, the living energy of it almost like an entity of its own. Each individual flashed by, self-propelled yet part of, one with, the pack. Each athlete was so focused, so intense, carefully gauging pace, spacing and contact with other runners, terrain, effort, distance. And as I watched, I felt my perspective change as I realized what each one was doing: Striving to exist.

Not all of us will run in a tightly-bunched pack of competitive, spike-wearing runners; yet many of us will enter an event/race this year, and still more of us will run or walk with others. For the solo runners and walkers, you too are part of a group, an entity called "runners" or "walkers" or "athletes." Being active in this way is an expression of who you are, your desires, and perhaps who you wish or declare yourself to be. For some of us, a time or place or performance marks that level of "success" or declaration that we have accomplished something worthy, notable, defining. For others, it's more a matter of the ritual, the doing-what-I-do because, well... that's what "I" do. Yet regardless of why you do what you do, your very doing it says something about you.

What are you declaring when you lace up the shoes... or, as some do, the non-shoes?

For the competitor, the pack is an exciting entity. Try watching a competitive pack of runners without emotion (I can't do it). I can hear that pack-- not the runners in it, but the pack itself-- thundering in footfalls and in unspoken words, a terrifying possibility:

"YOU are NOTHING! YOU will be LOST in the pack!"

Equally strong-- no, stronger, I can hear another voice speaking through me:

"You have the opportunity to BELIEVE; and in so doing, to delightfully, beautifully, spectacularly, and joyfully declare: TODAY, I more than EXISTED... I TRIUMPHED over the fear, the distance, the anonymity. Today I dared to dig deep and find ME."

It's that second voice that speaks to our competitive fires, that helps us hold contact with the next runner, that draws our eyes up towards the clock as we give it all we have towards that beckoning finish line.

Today, somewhere, a runner took her first steps. Another dreams of a high school record. Another ponders personal records. Olympic athletes train with long-term focus on the upcoming Games, or the next cycle beyond. Whether or not you focus on such lofty goals, or whether you use running to move beyond goals, beyond pressures, beyond the over-active mind towards peaceful mindfulness... go forth and enjoy your existence. Walk, or run... and as you do so, enjoy that YOU EXIST, in this way.

I'll see you on the roads and trails, my friends.



-Dr. Daniel A. Shaye

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Do you have a question you'd like answered? Mail your questions c/o Performance Chiropractic 1307 Jamestown Road, Ste. 103, Williamsburg, VA 23185; e-mail pchiro@performancechiropractic.com; visit us on FaceBook at <http://www.facebook.com/performancechiro>; or go to www.performancechiropractic.com