A Storytelling of the Marathon:

How the Integration of the Mind and Body in the Training and Racing of the Marathon is an Embodiment of the Hero’s Journey

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the art of storytelling and bibliotherapy in relation to marathon running by articulating relevant definitions to establish a theoretical structure from which the telling of the marathon can take place. The role of mind-body integration in both the training and racing of the marathon is then presented as an embodiment of the hero’s journey.

*Keywords:* storytelling, bibliotherapy, mind-body integration, myth, monomyth, hero’s journey, marathon

 Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind. –J. Campbell (2008, p.1)

This paper articulates the actual connection or conversation that occurs between the mind and the body at all different points of training, running, and completion of a marathon.  By providing a personal narrative with fragments of my own stories and experiences, I will gradually draw out the relationship between the mind and body by retelling my own stories as I prepare to train for and run a marathon in December. In doing so, I will tie in storytelling, bibliotherapy, the hero's journey, and marathon running with both the positive and negative impacts my mind has on my body: a narrative presence where the intersection of the mind and body unfolds. I will begin by offering definitions of important terms to provide a theoretical structure and then tell my own story of the marathon as an embodiment of the hero’s journey.

**Storytelling**

To tell the story of a marathon, it is important to first know how storytelling and its theoretical application, bibliotherapy, fit into the literature of mind-body medicine. Storytelling continues to be both an important human urge as well as an agent of change to create values and meaning, eliciting the necessity to understand them in our modern communities of family, business, as well as the military (Booker, 2006; Snowden, 1999; 2014). Snowden (1999) saw storytelling as a process, an “age-old ability of communities to convey complex knowledge” (p. 3) where storytelling can both unite and define communities by disclosing intellectual or knowledge assets and provide a “non-intrusive, organic means of producing sustainable cultural change” (p. 3) by conveying values and transferring knowledge. Booker (2006) saw all stories as having the same fundamental impulse, a hero or heroine who meets darkness and through the majority of the story, the dark power remains dominant. For Booker, the essence of the story’s action is the confrontation of light with darkness, and stories, which reach resolution, show how this dark power can be overthrown with the light. Booker also believed that if the hero or heroine identifies with light, they are liberated and whole, but if they choose darkness, they are destroyed; so the real purpose of storytelling is to show how light overcomes darkness. For Booker, this is “the archetypal pattern around which our human urge to imagine stories is ultimately centered” (p. 227). Snowden (2014) posited that there has never been a time when stories were not told, and what he refers to as “the formalization of the phrase” (p. 3) is a current phenomenon involving organizations, but also academic research, workshop facilitation, and management consultancy with no agreed-upon definition or definitions. He saw both the theory and practice of storytelling divided into three functions: (a) to communicate a message, (b) to both understand the nature of organizations and why people do what they do, and (c) as a means of knowledge storage and transfer. Snowden further saw how these three functions play a central role in what he called “action research”: “experiences are explored and knowledge generated from both the stories themselves and the act of telling them” (p. 3). The World Bank, the IBM Institute for Knowledge Management, as well as the U.S. military have all determined that stories “told in the field had higher utility for capturing and distributing knowledge than best practice documents” (p. 3). For example, the U.S. Army, a pioneer in the use of field narrative to create doctrine, discovered that “company commanders’ blogging and stories captured through a West Point program had more impact on field operations than doctrine” (p. 5). NASA also captured “key stories of employees who were due to retire and created libraries of that material which could be accessed by future generations” building some of the early narrative databases. Snowden (2014) saw storytelling as a “fundamental aspect of the way people make sense of the world” (p. 5) and has long been considered an agent of change, particularly in the early development of knowledge management. Snowden went on to describe the integration of traditional storytellers and those who study them with technology-oriented knowledge management, and an extension of this integration resulted in techniques to derive archetypes from these stories, “to match the work done by Joseph Campbell on the role of the archetypes in The Hero’s Journey” (p. 4). For Snowden, “the use of story in research is well established, and…preceded the organizational form. It engaged with the wider issue of observer independence within social science” (p. 4). With this in mind, Czarniawska (1998) argued that the “narrator and the listener must assume a shared context when inferring meaning from narrative statements, and further that as stories carry with them ambiguity, the meaning can be interpreted in different ways in different contexts” (pp. 4-5). Snowden finally referred to the “growth of social computing” creating a “new medium, both as a mechanism for the recording and distribution of stories and with whole new forms such as blogs and twitter” (p. 5).

**Bibliotherapy**

Bibliotherapy is derived from this significance of storytelling in our modern lives and is now an accepted therapeutic approach in terms of mind-body medicine (Campbell & Smith, 2003; Duffy, 2010; Early, 1993; Jack & Ronan, 2008; McKinney, 1975; Myers, 1998; Pardeck, 1991; 1994, 1995; Pehrsson, Allen, Folger, McMillen, & Lowe, 2007; Pehrsson & McMillon, 2005; Redding, Gaudiano, Herbert, & Forman, 2008; Shrodes, 1950; Zambelli & DeRosa, 1992). Shrodes (1950) was the first to write about bibliotherapy from a psychodynamic perspective, and believed that the psychological mechanisms underlying client change could be conceptualized as three processes: identification, catharsis, and insight (p. 33). McKinney (1975) believed that bibliotherapy is defined as a therapeutic process that worked with the assistance of the therapist through the interaction of the client’s personality and the literature. Early (1993) posited that the perceived mechanisms by which fictional-text bibliotherapy works initially grew out of the psychodynamic tradition, dealing primarily with allegorical or thematically layered stories and the role of symbol and metaphor in regard to the ego and the unconscious (p. 98). Pehrsson et al. (2007) defined bibliotherapy as “the use of books, literature, pamphlets, play scripts, narratives, journals, poems, songs, and stories adapted from cinema and television for the purpose of promoting therapeutic gain” (p. 410). Pardeck (1991, 1994) perceived bibliotherapy as either a primary mode of therapy or a supplemental tool but most effective when used as a supplement with other modalities such as cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), psychodynamic therapy, and interpersonal therapy. Campbell and Smith (2003) recommended that practitioners use bibliotherapy to reinforce items discussed during therapy, or to introduce new ideas or coping techniques. Redding et al. (2008) have even used the prescription of self-help books as a stand-alone form of therapy. Zambelli and DeRosa (1992) structured bibliotherapy by assigning the reading of fictional texts like song lyrics, poems, novels, or short stories, which allowed for reader expression and vicarious involvement with the characters and situations in the text. This fiction-based bibliotherapy incorporates the connection people already have to fictional stories and characters to enhance the therapeutic process when applicable. The use of fictional-based bibliotherapy is a form of therapy that may resonate strongly with clients because fiction taps into emotions, which appears to draw people to this type of text as compared to a self-help book. Pardeck (1995) wrote that there are six major goals of bibliotherapy: (a) information, (b) insight, (c) solutions, (d) contemplation and dialogue on problems, (e) communication of new values and attitudes, and (f) helping clients see that others have dealt with comparable issues. According to Duffy (2010), this form of therapy is based primarily on a combination of fiction-based bibliotherapy with the concepts of the collective unconscious and archetypes explicated by Carl Jung and the mono-myth and hero’s journey espoused by Joseph Campbell (p. 2). Drawing upon these elements, Duffy suggested that therapists could facilitate a process in which clients reconceptualize either their unique stressors or their unique transitions into a self-empowering perspective through the archetypal hero’s journey. Duffy further cited examples throughout the history of literature that are used to help both the mentally and physically ill. Jack and Ronan (2008) believed that as early as the Middle Ages, books were prescribed to help people cope with mental and physical illnesses. In the United States, Karl Menninger published *The Human Mind* in 1945, which is considered to be the first self-help book (Redding et al., 2008). Pehrsson and McMillen (2005) observed that history is replete with literature used as both a form of therapy in and of itself and as a supplement to other forms of therapy (p. 5) and as Myers (1998) asserted, “the use of selected books in counseling is applicable to persons in all stages of life, from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and with a wide variety of problems” (p. 76).

**Mind-Body Integration**

Storytelling and bibliotherapy are part of an integrated approach to wellness that integrates into mind-body practice. In my own storytelling of the marathon, one cannot adequately train for and then run a marathon without experiencing this sort of integration. Gilbert (2003) sees mind-body medicine as a way of experiencing health and wellness that both “mirrors and integrates every facet of life. It weaves together the central components that contribute to an individual’s experience, and in so doing honors that weaving as a sum greater than the individual parts” (p. 564).

**Hero**

An important way to experience and understand this integrated approach to wellness is the hero’s journey. For Campbell (2008), the hero concept means someone who has achieved submission. In other words, the hero solves what he or she needs to submit to and then acts upon it.

**Myth**

To understand the hero’s journey one needs to understand myth. Robert Quinn (1996) in his book *Deep Change*, reiterated the power and importance of myth that echoes these beliefs of Campbell. Rollo May (as cited in Pitchford, 2009) suggested that myth serves both a progressive as well as a regressive function. When regressive, myth reveals an individual’s repressed longings, urges, and dreams. However, myth can also expose progressive material about new insights, hopes, beliefs, dreams, and other potentials. The two benefits together bring healing and growth. Myth serves as metaphors for the journey (Campbell, 1991; Pederson, 2011), leading to the wholeness that we as humans are all invited to take. Myth is intended to offer guidance for how to travel this road successfully. Such a journey is not only of value for its accuracy in framing life experience, but for what Pederson also referred to as the “mythological parallels” (p. 209). This could be interpreted as understanding life changes where myth offers both meaning and motivation (Eliade, 1959, 1963; Pederson, 2011). According to Hartman and Zimberoff (2009), myth is the dream of the people, or the dream is the myth of the individual. For Eliade (1963), myth narrates this sacred significance by relating an event that took place in primordial time, because myth tells how a reality came into existence through the deeds of supernatural beings and is usually an account of a creation where it tells how something was produced or begun, and describes various breakthroughs of the sacred into our world. Eliade saw the foremost function of myth as revealing exemplary models for all human rites and all significant human activities. According to Campbell (2008), myths have been a significant part of every culture and civilization because they are “the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind” (p. 1).

**Mono-Myth**

Campbell (1976) applied Jung’s concepts of the collective unconscious and archetypes to his study of mythology, noticing that stories and myths had characters, plot structures, and underlying themes that appeared similar, regardless of the storyteller’s location in reference to time period, geography, religious beliefs, level of education, or socioeconomic factors. Recognizing these similarities and their connection to Jung’s concepts of the collective unconscious and archetypes, Campbell (2008) espoused a concept that he termed the “Mono-Myth,” or the idea that beneath these various storytelling, there is sameness. Campbell further hypothesized that these similarities regarding character types, plot structure, and themes are representations of various archetypes that exist in the unconscious of all humans, and although unaware of the actual archetypes or even the existence of archetypes, the creators of these stories, whether individuals or groups, are constrained by the unconscious parameters or structure of the archetypes and, therefore, unconsciously weave the stories within those boundaries. Campbell further believed that this is the reason for the similarities between all of these examined stories and myths, even though time, place, language, culture, and people separate them. However, what Campbell (2008) called the “nuclear unit of the mono-myth” and the “essence” of the hero’s journey can be conceptualized as separation, initiation, and return (p. 23).

**Hero’s Journey**

 This hero’s journey archetype is what Maher and Briggs (1989) called “the essence of mythology” (p. 23). Campbell (2008) went on to describe the metaphorical hero’s journey as a basic structured formula that is found within many myths and stories, and has not changed throughout the entire post-literate history of humankind. For Campbell (2008), “the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage:-separation-initiation-return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth” (p. 23). Campbell’s articulation of these rites of passage has also been elucidated by other researchers (Catford and Ray, 1991; Duffy, 2010; Halstead, 2000; Hartman and Zimberoff, 2009; Hillman, 1977; Pearson, 1998; Pederson, 2011; Quinn, 1996; Roberts, 2005; Senn, 2002).

**Marathon**

The training for and the racing of a marathon is an embodiment of this journey and the storytelling of the marathon is a narrative process that has historical precedence. The marathon is a running event with a distance of 42.195 kilometers or 26.2 miles, and is usually run as a road race. The event commemorates the run of Pheidippides, a Greek soldier and messenger from the Battle of Marathon to Athens and it is an adventure that can be divided into these three same rites of passage: separation, initiation, and return.

**Mind-Body Marathon Training and Racing as an Embodiment of the Hero’s Journey**

 The following section provides my own storytelling of my training for and racing marathons within the context of the hero’s journey and these three rites of passage.

**Separation**

**Call to Adventure**

Pederson (2011) saw this “call” generally stemming from some kind of tension without a conscious response. This leads to a conscious framing when the hero realizes it is a call to his true self and results in commitment and engagement (p. 209). This adventure can begin as a mere blunder, or chance where, according to Campbell (2008), an unsuspecting world is revealed “and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood” (p. 42).

After moving to the Washington, DC metropolitan area over 20 years ago, I was riding the Metro and saw an advertisement for the Marine Corps marathon and I was drawn to the idea of running it. I did not understand what the physical training required but knew I would run it. My mind was set. My mind agreed but my body did not realize what it was getting into. As far as the intelligence of my body, I learned from running this first marathon about the call and the initiation, as well as the return. I learned firsthand how my body needed a more articulated training plan. I knew I needed to do this and the knowing here was primarily mental. I ran my first marathon without realizing the physical consequences.

**Supernatural Aid**

According to Campbell (2008), “for those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass” (p. 57).

After finishing my first marathon without actually training for it, I realized I could do much better if I were more mindful and trained intelligently. I hired a running coach, joined a local running group, and subscribed to *Road Runner’s* magazine. I started a more physical process of training. An article in *Road Runner’s* magazine mentioned the benefits of massage in marathon training.

So, to integrate both my body and mind into training for my second marathon I scheduled my first massage. Soon thereafter, my massage therapist, a former president of the American Massage Therapy Association, told me of a local massages school where he had taught. I enrolled immediately. In both my body and mind, I was called. I knew I wanted to work with athletes and to become one myself. So, between my massage training and my running coach’s plan for me, I had the help I needed to accomplish my second marathon. My motivation was both mental and physical.

**The Crossing the First Threshold**

 According to Campbell (2008), with the personifications of his destiny to guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in his adventure until he comes to the “threshold guardian” at the entrance to the zone of magnified power. For Campbell, “the usual person is more than content, he is even proud, to remain within the indicated bounds, and popular belief gives him every reason to fear so much as the first step into the unexplored” (p. 64).

I was not content. I wanted to explore how much faster I could run a marathon with an intelligent training plan. I knew I could run a faster marathon but both my wife and children tempered the entrance to this experience. My wife would ask me why I could not be more moderate in my training and my children would stay up late Friday evening when I knew I had to get to bed to be able to get up and join the local runner’s group for the long Saturday runs. Balancing the demands of a family with relatively small children at the time and my own training was a threshold to be crossed. Instead of having conversation between my mind and my body, I was conversing with my wife and children.

**Initiation**

For Campbell (2008),“once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth-adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals” (p. 81).

I would wake up early and start my runs around 5:00 or 5:30 a.m. in my neighborhood. I partnered with the local running club for my long runs and offered discounted massage for the runners in this club. Getting up in the morning was really not a trial. I still live for being able to start my runs in the morning darkness, seeing the sun come up while running, knowing that I am able to get up and get out regardless of the weather. For example, last winter when the weather was extremely cold, because I was able to run without pain, I was out running every day. I felt like I had mastered an important part of myself. The integration of my mind and body was almost complete. The conversation I was having was with my external world, my wife, my children, and my clients. I really think that my sense of yearning and aligning with my higher self increased my contact with something higher and larger than myself. I was integrating my insight and dissolving both an old cognition and self-expression as I came to see myself as a serious, dedicated runner. I was not afraid.

For Pederson (2011), this is where the hero goes beyond the last terrors of ignorance, where the “envelopment of consciousness has been annihilated” and where the hero “becomes free of all fear, beyond the reach of change” (p. 209). This is the release of the potential within us all, and which anyone can attain through hero-hood.

**Return**

 The hero’s journey is traditionally circular and follows a pattern (Campbell, 2008; Senn, 2002; Stewart, 1991) where the hero must return. For Campbell (2008), the norm of the monomyth requires that the hero labor to bring back “the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds” (p. 167).

 In a runner’s life, nothing compares to coming home after a run or a race well-done. However, both can be fraught with potential injury and can be disappointing because the goal was not reached. When a runner trains the mind as systematically as he or she trains the body, the chances for an integrated race increase and in the longer races like the marathon, mental training results in success. This reflects the possibility and potential for both light and darkness. The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness to accomplish his adventure; his return is described as a “coming back.” For Campbell (2008), the key to the understanding of myth and symbol concerning light and darkness is that these two are actually one” (p. 188).

The sense of completion results in satisfaction. There is no better reward than knowing in your mind and body that you have surpassed your own limitations. For this reason, I prefer training rather than actually racing. The physical and mental response to the run is its own reward. The endorphins that naturally arise are amazing. The training as well as the racing is a priceless gift but at the same time there is always the potential for injury and for not being able to run or to compete. I was unable to run for 3 years and my identity and mental wellness suffered. I had a dream during this period where I was driving home in a car and came to an intersection. At that point in the dream, I was left with the impression, “you’ll need to choose another way to get back home.” I was able to train for another marathon this past May and was able to complete it without any pain. It was my slowest marathon finishing time but I had practiced my mental training and felt as if I had run this marathon without running it, letting the race come to me. This is very satisfying.

**Conclusion**

 Training for and running a marathon is an adventure. According to Roberts (2005), adventure is a means by which we can transcend perceived limitations and achieve personal transformation. I have experienced this while both training for and racing a marathon. For Pederson (2011), the framework of Campbell’s (1949) hero’s journey can lead many of us to personal transformation that reflect what Pederson referred to as “storied patterns” (p. 208).

Senn (2002) also spoke of both pattern and image of this journey, both as a container and context for what she referred to as “the guiding principles of the universe” (p. 139), and according to Duffy (2010), although using books for therapeutic purposes to heal has been a method employed by healers for thousands of years, using the Jungian archetype of the hero’s journey to create an alternative conceptualization that resonates consciously and unconsciously with clients may serve to empower them as well as normalize and destigmatize their “symptoms.” Duffy further saw the use of literature that contains elements of the hero’s journey as a viable mode of therapy and that the hero’s journey bibliotherapy provides a much more empowering concept than what is found in *The* *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; *DSM-5;* American Psychiatric Association, 2013). According to Duffy, the hero’s journey aligns more with what he referred to as “our human-development focused, strength-based, personal growth oriented identity” (p. 14).

 Furthermore, these three phases of the hero’s journey appear to be articulated in a cyclical pattern moving from left to right, but what I have found is that the patterns are really more nonlinear, for they do not always happen in this cyclical pattern. I think the phases of the hero’s journey are quantum, which means these phases do not need to necessarily happen one after the other sequentially, but could and do happen spontaneously or in a certain nonlinear fashion which quantum theory can help explain (Hale, 2015).

In my training for a December marathon, I needed to run 12 miles this week. Running around Monona Lake in Madison, Wisconsin on a perfect autumn morning the day of the Ironman Wisconsin race, I realized that the 12.5-mile path around the lake could be an embodiment of the hero’s journey. I could have started running to the left like I did with my bicycle a couple of days before, but I started in the opposition direction. I could have stopped any time. I could have turned around at any point but I chose to continue to where I initially started. I completed a circle but I did not need to. I returned.

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**Appendix**

**Journal**

September 4, 2015 Saturday morning 5:00am.

At mile 5 and a half of a 7-mile run this morning, I was caught up in the sounds. I heard the crickets, the cicadas. I heard the freeway. I was in the moment with the sounds around me and was grateful.

September 5, 2015, Sunday afternoon

I took off running today. My left ankle is hurting me. I did not ice last night. I will tonight in preparation for my longest run Monday morning. My mind is worried. My left ankle is not happy.

September 6, 2015, Monday morning

I just finished my longest run in this training cycle. I started with a girl who is running the Richmond marathon in November. She has a heart condition and as we were running this morning I was determined to see her through the hardest part of our run with some hills to run up. I held the image of us successfully completing the hills together without her stopping. She told me several times to go ahead but I was determined to stay with her and support her. I measured what I did and did not tell her. I just wanted to be present with her. We did make it to the top of the hills together. I purposefully slowed down my pace and stayed just a little ahead of her. We left each other when I turned around and heading back to the parking lot. I was with myself, my mind. I was totally in the morning’s moment. There was a cool breeze, the crickets and cicadas were singing. I also heard birds and a plane or two above me and some traffic on the run below the running path. It was truly a perfect autumn morning. I focused on my breathing. I focused on centering my mind. I pulled back my mind each time I noticed my mind wondering. I wanted to stay just in the moment and enjoy the fact that I was pushing through to the longest run of this training cycle for me. I was purposeful and focused and came back again and again after my mind wandered. I enjoyed breathing. I really enjoyed this run. My left ankle did not hurt too much. I’ll need to soak it in the ice bucket to sometime in between clients. I’m grateful. I also realized that I am training a bit differently and listening more to my body. I did not run yesterday to be rested for today’s longest run. I did not run either Thursday or Friday of last week for the same reasons. In past training cycles, I would push through regardless of what my body was telling me but I am listening more and honoring my body. I feel much more in the moment, and much more letting my training, my track workouts and my nutrition come to me in the Taoist sense of doing without doing, training for a marathon without training for a marathon, eating without eating. I am really enjoying this mind body combination.

September 7, Tuesday morning

My left Achilles is whispering to me. I did the ice bath last night and it helped take down the inflammation. I was supposed to go to the track this morning and am in the parking lot of the service center for our Honda waiting in back of several Hondas to get serviced this morning if possible. I thought I would be early but there are so many cars in front of me. I worked on a client who is an experienced running coach yesterday and asked him to draw up a training plan for me to show me where I need to do the 20-mile runs before my December 6th marathon. This will help me to get an important perspective. I always think that my own work as a sports massage therapist is informed by an intelligent training plan. I also spoke with my coach who offered to give me the training plan and he told me I should lose the weight I have gained since my May marathon. I need to loose 21 pounds to get back to my marathon race weight.

September 9, Wednesday afternoon

Yesterday, I registered for the Paris marathon on the 3rd of April. This will be the marathon where I want to be able to qualify for the Boston Marathon. I’ll need a 3:40 finishing time or faster to do this. My nephew who lives in Switzerland also registered and we will run it together. I am really excited about this future endeavor and feel that my marathon in December will be but a preparation for this one. This morning I also made hotel reservations and then forwarded the reservation to my nephew. I reserved a room from March 31st through to April 4th with two beds in case he needs to stay with my wife and myself. I also am committed to loose my 21 pounds I’ve gained since training for my May marathon. I plan to loose 11 before December’s marathon and then the last 10 by the April marathon. Today while shopping, I noticed I was buying things that had a higher protein count than carbohydrate like kale chips and unroasted almonds. My coach who is drawing up my training plan really emphasized that if I expect to run faster, I’ll need to get back down to my marathon race weight which is 153. The last time I weighed myself I was at 173.5. I also realized that in the writing of this paper and in talking to my clients, the cycle articulated by Campbell going from left around up to the starting point is not perhaps how I best experience the hero’s journey. In my own training, I think that the hero’s journey for me is much more non-linear and that the events in Campbell’s articulation do not necessarily need to happen in order because they are non-linear and that quantum theory can help explain this.

September 10, Thursday evening

I worked most of the day at the Active Release Techniques (ART) tent at the Ironman Wisconsin in Madison. After finishing working, I was planning on running 7 miles with a colleague on her bike following me but she suggested we just bike around the lake. I agreed. I thought that in the moment this would be a good idea. She hesitated at first after a couple of miles to go completely around the lake but we did. I was determined to go the distance.

September 11, 2015 Friday

I worked on my client in the afternoon with whom I’ve been working for almost a year. He came to me unable to run without and now on Sunday he will participate in Ironman Wisconsin with hopes to achieve a Kona qualifying time. This is why I do what I do.

I ran by myself along the lake this afternoon. I was slow but focused my mind on the blessing of being able to run. I worked on a women who is 58 years old and participate din her first Ironman soon after she had broken her pelvis. She did a recording for me which I hopefully will use in a series of podcasts I will release in January. What struck me is that she purposefully was kind to her body. She imaged her own healing and successfully finished her first Ironman. She is an inspiration. I am thinking about registering for my first Ironman which will be Ironman Maryland 2 and a half hours form where I live. I was invited by Ironman to come and work on the triathletes racing the Ironman Maryland the second Saturday of October. I get to register early because I will have the status of a volunteer. Lots to think on.

The 11th is also important because I was training for my second Marine Corps Marathon when 9/11 happened. It was just a few weeks from my marathon and I had put together a holistic training plan that included people to help a process and me to move me forward to my goal of finishing my second marathon.

September 12, 2015 Saturday

I worked on my client yesterday as well as other competitors. I have a great deal of satisfaction in knowing that my client was unable to run without pain when he first came to me and that Sunday morning he will be competing. For me, this is what my work is all about, forming a relationship with an athlete who is passionate about his work and then following him to his or her competition.

September 13, 2015 Sunday morning 5:57am

I am getting ready to go down to the start of the Iron Man and watch the start. I am planning on running 12-13 miles around the lake afterwards. I could feel my left Achilles and ankle Saturday while working and walking. I am hoping that this morning’s run will be pain free and am imaging a successful run.

I came back from successfully running around like Monona this morning. I started my run after the swimmers started their Ironman. I realized that this path around this lake could be an embodiment of the hero’s journey. I realized as well that the quantum nature of all things could also apply to the hero’s journey. I could have started out going to the left but chose to go to the right. I could have stopped or turned back around but chose to continue around the lake in a clockwise direction until I came back to where I had started. I had returned to the starting place.