

Pacing yourself for the marathon finish

AUSTRALIAN author and motivational speaker Catherine De Vrye once stated: "If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably leads nowhere."

There are so many things that can knock us down, like cash-flow, people, fire, health, unity... even the little things, like gossip and rumours, have the potential to derail our plans.

It is no use having a great vision and plan, but not making any progress because of obstacles or difficulties.

We can learn a lot from that blow-up rubber toy with the weight at the bottom.

When you hit it, it falls over, but it bounces right back up again. Like that toy, we have to learn to not stay down. If we stay down, we may never be able to get up again. If we stay knocked down, we will have lost, because that is the signal that we are finished, that we are defeated.

Poet H. Lena Jones once wrote: "You're never down, you're either up or in the process of getting up."

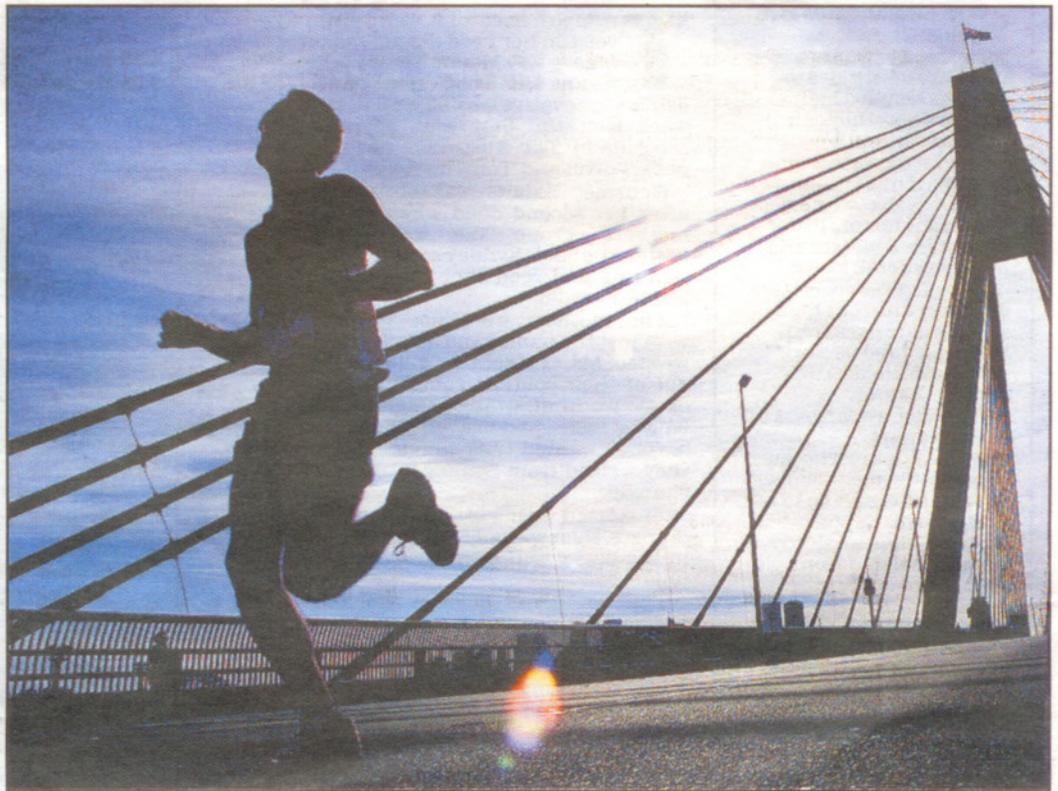
Every time we get hit, we have to learn to get back up and face the challenge in front of us.

The issues we faced at Gloria Jean's Coffees in the early days prepared us for the bigger issues we face today. If we hadn't faced the smaller challenges, although they were large for our size at that stage in the company's growth, we would not be able to face the challenges that confront us today.

So face your challenges today. Don't run away or stay knocked down, because these obstacles are going to strengthen you to continue your journey. And if you overcome today's challenges, you'll be better equipped to face tomorrow's challenges.

We have to admit that we sometimes cause our own stumbling blocks. Look at some of the following issues and see if any of these are limiting your progress and your success: pride, competitiveness, an unforgiving spirit, immaturity and selfishness.

If you want the ability to easily overcome obstacles, if you want to finish strongly, then deal with these issues. Each one can hold you back from your true potential. If you want to build your career or your business, then deal now with these issues in your life. Your effectiveness will be limited if these issues remain a part of your character.



Go the distance... crossing the finish line will bring you that reward, whether it's a trophy or money

Peter Irvine helped guide the Australian success of Gloria Jean's Coffee. His book *Win in Business* reveals behind-the-counter stories of this achievement and offers 20 key ways to realise the dream of running a stand-out business. The following extract examines how to finish strongly.

In life there are three kinds of people: those who start wrong, but finish right, those who start right, but finish wrong and those who are afraid to start.

Only one of these kinds of people arrives at the finish line. The good news for many of us is that we can start wrong and still finish strongly.

We can stumble at the start and fall over along the way, but we can all finish strongly.

Don't be afraid to try. Our fears can be based on the worst lies in the world. Our fears will try to convince us of many things that aren't true.

For this reason, we should never make decisions based on our fears. Instead we should tackle fear head on, hang out with courageous people, go for it and believe you can make it.

No one can make you inferior without your consent. What is important is not what others say about you, but what you say to yourself after they get through talking. When the criticism stops, how do you react?

Do you believe them or do you shake off their words?

When you decide to seize the moment and move ahead, you will often leave others behind, like friends and family and some of them won't be too happy about that. The only way to avoid experiencing any kind of opposition is to do nothing and stay where you are, and that's simply not acceptable.

Focus on endurance, not speed. Seasoned long-distance runners pace themselves so that as they approach the finish line they can pull out all stops. There will be

disappointments, delays and obstacles that can knock you down along the way, but don't be satisfied with just sitting on the sideline cheering for those who have paid the price to run the race.

You will only endure the pain when you have something to look forward to. Crossing the finish line will bring you that reward, whether it's a trophy, money, applause, sponsorship or just a fit and healthy body.

Success comes only when you are committed and have the passion to cross the finish line. Set your eye on the goal, run to win, and you're sure to cross the finish line. To finish strongly, you need a great attitude. To develop and maintain a great attitude, you need to take charge of your emotions, you need to focus on what's good and reject anything that makes you a petty or bitter person.

Peter Irvine's Win in Business (Ark House Press) is available from leading retailers and book stores nationally. For further information or to order copy go to www.pirvine.com.