

The Confidence Journal

This exercise comes from Kara Goucher's book *Strong*. Its goal is to build confidence, by focusing on your current training and workouts, which will lead up to a specific race or series of races.

After each workout, Kara asks herself questions like 'what was great about my run', 'what did I fight through', 'what surprised me'. The key is to **be as specific as possible**, so that as you review the journal at a later time – like just before your goal race – you'll remember exactly what that journal entry is referring to. Kara would review her journal the night before she raced and it would keep her calm and give her confidence because it reminded her of all her hard work. Here's an example from her journal;

"Hard windy day. So windy! 23 total w/ middle 15 doing 2 miles @ race pace and then 1 steady. A little slow overall, but really worked the last set hard, so never gave in."

Initially, this workout was probably a bummer for Kara, given that she says "a little slow overall". However, she dug a little deeper to see what was really going on and then **found the positive**, "Hard, windy day... really worked... never gave in." By doing this over and over she's able to build her confidence.

The key for this to work is **being consistent**. Goucher suggests doing this after every run. That's great if you can be that diligent, but it may be difficult to come up with ideas after an easy day. At a minimum you should **journal after key workouts** (hills, speed sessions, long runs, etc.). Personally, I take her idea one step further and also include gratitude entries. I simply write things that I was grateful for during my run. Here's an example from my journal;

"Wow! This run defined nearly everything I love in a run. Cool, crisp 45 degrees = shorts and long sleeve. Full moon on one side of me and sunrise on the other. To top it off my legs felt really strong and my breathing was never labored."

Our happiness is linked to the effort it takes us to feel gratitude. For example, if we can be grateful just seeing the sunrise, we're going to be happier than the person that needs \$1 million to be grateful.

Let's face it. We're not professional runners, so feel free to also celebrate and track your accomplishments from all areas of your life (school, relationships, faith, and so on). Not

only will these types of self-reflections help build confidence and joy in your running, but in your life too.