

You Know What, This Challenge Doesn't Seem...FAIR.

“So let me get this straight. I wake up 3 hours before the sun and bust my ass at Orange Theory for 60 minutes. Sweat out 4% of my body weight, burn 5,000 calories, and hit the orange zone for like 49 minutes, and all I get is SEVEN POINTS? Some dude goes and hits a plastic wiffleball with an oversized ping-pong paddle for an hour, AND HE GETS THE SAME AMOUNT??!! That doesn't seem...FAIR.”

^ this is definitely not a real quote and definitely not even remotely paraphrased from someone currently doing this challenge. But we have heard quotes LIKE this.

You are absolutely correct. The Relentless 2800 Challenge is not “fair.” And the truth is, it's designed that way.

The original intent of the challenge was to move a group of 10 humans 2800 miles during the season of Lent. Early on, we discussed that biking 7 miles is WAY easier than running 7 miles. If you've ever done a 20-mile bike ride, you know that's a lot different from running a 20. So, we modified it to kilometers. (Tip of the hat to our European listeners.)

But then we thought, what about aging 45-year-old dudes who should cut back on cardio and probably start lifting more weights? Getting into the gym to lift heavy things feels like it should be worth something. We made it worth 7RMs. But again, not all effort is equal.

It's also not fair because crossing the country by biking or hiking wouldn't be fair.

In this imaginary race across the USA, you can imagine that some sections would be easier than others. The person biking up the mountain pass in Colorado is way different than the guy who gets to bike DOWN that same pass. Hiking the rocky crags of the upper Appalachian Mountains is different than strolling across Kansas. The point is effort isn't equal.

“Well, you could give each participant a calorimeter and use a direct calorimetry technique to quantify each person's metabolic rate during the exertion sessions.”

*[*snort* pushes up glasses *snort*]*

Yeah. That sounds really simple. We'll note your feedback.

"I mean, are these teams even fair?"

Not even close.

Apparently, some of these teams are filled with men and women TRAINING FOR A SUPER IRON MAN TRIATHOLON. Sheesh.

One of my all-time favorite quotes gets attributed to Teddy Roosevelt. He said:

"Comparison is the thief of joy."

BTW, I LOVE that our leaderboard leaders are killing this thing. I love that certain groups have dug their heels in and pushed themselves past the limit of what we even imagined possible. Seriously. You guys are ridiculous, and I love it.

But, for the rest of us, if you've ever found yourself peeking at the overall leaderboard and feeling a tinge of depression, you're experiencing the very thing Teddy talked about.

Remember, these teams aren't fair. This isn't even a RACE. It's a challenge to achieve 2800.

It's also not fair because life isn't fair.

Since Lent is a Bible-related thing, let's look at something Bible-ly. There's a book in the New Testament called Hebrews where the author says in chapter 12: "...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us..." Said differently, run YOUR race.

Fairness seems to be ingrained in us as humans. But life just doesn't operate fairly. Right now, one of my friends, who happens to be one of the healthiest humans I know, is dealing with cancer. Meanwhile, my aunt's mom didn't quit smoking until she was in her NINETIES. In fact, her doctor even cautioned her against it. He said, "You know what, cigarettes seem to be working for you; maybe don't change anything." In other words, NOT FAIR.

And yet, that old Hebrew verse rings true. RUN YOUR RACE. The one in front of you. Not someone else's. Not one that would be more fair. Run YOURS.

Some of my favorite moments of this challenge have been hearing stories about people who, for the first time, have started working out every day. People who could care less about that leaderboard and are just trying to get their 280 RMs. In other words, people running THEIR RACE.

You guys, my daughter got home from a choir concert and went to the basement to ride two miles on the stationary bike in her dress! Do you want to know the last time that happened? Never.

That, my friends, is the spirit of the 2800. A chance to push yourself. A chance to help your team. But mostly, it is a constant reminder to get out there and move your body.

And nope, it's definitely not fair.

DVal (from HQ)