



# Runaway Success

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO TRANSFORM YOUR MINDSET INTO THAT OF AN ENDURANCE ATHLETE – AND WHY DO IT IN THE FIRST PLACE? **GINA MCKIE** IS FEELING INSPIRED THIS ISSUE BY THE DETERMINATION OF A MAN CALLED STEVIE

I've followed an interesting guy on social media for a few years, and I want to share his story. He could barely run a bath, and now he is tackling the highest marathon in the world – Everest! His name is Stevie Kidd and he holds many titles in life. He is a husband, a father, an entrepreneur, an executive coach and most recently, he has become an endurance athlete.

It was in May 2015 that Stevie climbed more than five thousand steps and ran a total of 26 miles in just over eight hours to complete the Great Wall of China Marathon.

He wasn't much of a runner before China. Only a few months prior to the marathon, the thought of having to run anywhere made him feel nauseous. So how did he make the transformation from a non-runner into someone that was able to conquer the third hardest marathon in the world? And why?

It all started in Perth. He was there to meet with Aberdeen FC manager, Derek McInnes to explore the possibility of developing a coaching partnership.

Before he agreed to coach Derek, he had to find out if he was coachable. Stevie asked him an important question. Could Derek see himself managing Real Madrid within five years? Derek never answered the question. Instead he looked at Stevie like he was mad and quickly changed the subject. Without uttering a word, Derek had made it clear that the answer to the question was a resounding 'no'.

That was the answer Stevie expected. Like many others, Derek had limited beliefs about what he could realistically achieve.

In the end, Stevie agreed to work with Derek for a season. Following this, Aberdeen had a very successful season. However, he wasn't the only one that had changed.

Through working with Derek, Stevie had planted a seed in his own subconscious mind that was going to change his life.



As he was driving home, Stevie heard his inner voice. We all have this voice – some of us just choose not to listen to it. Stevie told me he has been listening to this voice since he was 12 years old.

This time felt different. At first it was congratulating him on working with Derek – a great exchange of energies. But then it started to question what he really wanted out of life. How could he really make a difference in the world? For the first time in his life, he couldn't answer the questions his inner voice was asking him.

He decided to go to the gym to try and forget about this mental challenge. As he walked into the changing rooms, he was drawn to a poster about a charity that supports amputees and those with limb differences, Finding Your Feet. On the poster was an image of the founder, Corinne Hutton.

The poster had been on the changing room wall for several weeks and he must have walked past it many times without paying any attention to it. For some reason it jumped out at him – he would later find out why.

He tried to do his session as normal, but couldn't train properly as those questions from the drive home kept haunting his thoughts. He had to find a way to answer them, so he went home and wrote a list of things he detested. At the very top – running!

After writing the list, he sat on the couch staring at it for what seemed like hours. Then suddenly, he snapped out of his daze and jumped up off the couch! He could feel a driver within him, moving him forward. He knew he had to start running.

He quickly put on his trainers and headed outside for a run. When he returned, he searched online for the world's hardest marathons. The Everest Marathon was number one, but he knew he wasn't ready for that... just yet.

Number three on the list was The Great Wall of China Marathon. He told himself he could do this one. He signed up

for it there and then. Stevie realised that if he attempted this alone it could damage his relationship with his wife, Lesley. So without telling Lesley, he signed her up for the 8.5km fun run across the Great Wall. Thankfully, she was up for this!

Suddenly Stevie remembered the poster in the gym for Finding Your Feet, and he immediately emailed Corinne Hutton and asked for a meeting. He made up his mind that he would raise funds for this incredible charity.

Stevie tells his clients all the time that they need to work and learn from the best in the business at whatever they do. This is when he signed up for an endurance coach, Simon Lim. He had no idea how hard it was to stay motivated as the pain from working out was more intense than he had ever imagined.

Social media to the rescue! He used his online platforms to tell the world about what he was doing and used the words



Corinne Hutton, founder of the charity Finding Your Feet

of encouragement from friends and family to drive him forward.

He also got his fair share of negativity from people who didn't believe he could do the marathon. One day he walked into the gym and a lawyer was laughing at him, highlighting the fact that he didn't believe for a second Stevie could run a marathon. Stevie closed his eyes, slowed down time and envisioned failing and having to return to tell him he was right to doubt him. He would later use the memory of this encounter to spur him on during the marathon.

Before he knew it, 27 weeks of his life had passed and he was now in China ready to run. To get a medal, you had to finish within eight hours, and as Stevie was going up the wall for the final time, he was on course to do just that. Then he came across a man who was at the starting line with him. He was hurt and couldn't carry on... Stevie had a choice to make.

As you enter mile 20 of the marathon, you start to climb the wall again. You also see people being carried down the wall on stretchers, so Stevie knew what was ahead of him. He could either keep going, finish on time and get a medal, or stop and seek help for a fellow human. He did the latter.

The last six miles were the hardest, climbing the wall again. The tiredness was overwhelming. The memory of the encounter with the lawyer laughing would prove to be his ace card. He used this to drive him over the finish line. The thought of proving him wrong was all the motivation he needed to keep going and not quit.

Stevie completed the challenge of finishing the Great Wall of China Marathon and raised over £3,000 for Finding Your Feet. His final time was eight hours and ten minutes – however, they still gave him the medal.

But why did he really run this marathon? Yes, he did it to

challenge himself and raise money for charity, but deep down, he discovered the real reason. I couldn't wait to hear the real reason until Stevie explained that he had not been entirely honest with me. At the time he decided to take on the challenge he was still recovering from losing one of his businesses.

He needed something that would be more painful than the internal suffering he was feeling. The physical pain of training for a marathon was exactly what was required, but now it was over. After the marathon, the organisers put on a post-marathon party, but that night he found himself feeling depressed and sitting in a corner on his own.

He remembered he felt like this when he was younger. From the age of 12, he had visualised himself owning a company and this he achieved by the time he was 17 years old. He hadn't planned anything beyond this. When he got what

he wanted he felt lost, low. Now, age 45, after completing the third hardest marathon in the world he felt the same way.

That was about to change thanks to a man by the name of Doug White. Doug has run in marathons all over the world and he approached Stevie at the party that night and told him he knew how he felt. He offered to help plan his endurance journey, and with Doug's help, Stevie identified other marathons around the world he wanted to run.

So for the last two years, that's exactly what Stevie has been doing. With the support of Doug and fitness coach, Casey Morgan, he has taken part in many marathons around the UK and abroad continuing to raise money for Finding Your Feet.

In 2016, he climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro before coming off the mountain and running a marathon in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, raising nearly £4000k.

Earlier this year, he competed in the Walt Disney World Marathon, which is a series of marathons across Florida. Recently, he raised money for Combat Stress by climbing the five highest peaks in Scotland in 24 hours with his son Ryan.

He has now turned his attention to running the world's highest marathon – the Everest Marathon – before the end of this year. It doesn't stop there. He has a five year vision to run a marathon on every continent of the world, plus run the North Pole Marathon. At present only 156 people in the world have achieved this dream but he has set his sights on being number 157.

Running has changed his life in more ways than he could ever have imagined. It has changed his personal life, transformed his business life and it has also changed his family's life – for the better!

Stevie surrounds himself with the best coaches and the love of his family. He firmly believes you should set yourself challenges, but enjoy the journey along the way.

Perhaps you are thinking Stevie is superhuman, crazy or extremely ambitious. The one thing for sure is that he has a superhuman way of thinking. It's worth exploring in your mind the biggest challenge you would like to complete. Believe it and achieve it.

I am so inspired by Stevie's story. A non-runner to an endurance athlete! I just don't want to ask him about his knees... **SW**

