

Dr Cooper: Hi you guys, welcome to the audio diary, the next audio diary where I'm going to be talking about my running and my recent running improvement in my physical fitness. So I've talked before about the process, my process, my personal process of working out and how it relates to my strategy for learning a second language. I'm not going to go into all the details that I've already mentioned in other audio diaries, I'll just say that my first great achievement through effort, through hard work was when I got into really great physical fitness and became a good runner, a great runner, very, very good runner. And this happened, this was a sort of inspiration, it was a moment of epiphany because before I had- I always thought, the way I think most people think that when somebody is a great athlete or great at any sort of ability such as learning a language or being a great mathematician, people tend to think that this is all genetic.

We have the idea that the reason this person learns a lot of languages is he's genetically good at languages. The reason this person who is extremely [Portuguese 00:01:47] and is in extremely good shape is because he's genetically built for that. The reason this person is a great footballer is because he was gifted genetically. And although that may be some of the answer, it's a small amount. But when I was a kid I thought it was everything. So when I was six, seven years, eight, nine years old, I realized I was good at school and then I never really tried because I just assumed I would always be good at school and I didn't have to put effort in. Same thing with sports. Even though I was a little kid and a skinny kid when I was seven, eight, nine, 10, 11 years old, I was always one of the best athletes, not the best.

I was very small, but I wasn't the best. I was one of the best and I didn't train, it was just natural. So I thought this would always be the case and when I was about 16, 17, I realized, wait a second, I haven't worked out at all. I don't do sports at all anymore, I don't study. And you know what, I'm not so good as I thought I would be. And when I decided, and I realized that, is physically that my mental image of myself, which was of an athlete, wasn't what other people saw. They saw somebody who wasn't in good shape and this pushed me into working out and I learned how to work out and I became from the rest of my life until the last two or three years, in a very, very good shape. And at one point when I first started, I became a very, very good runner, which is what we're talking about today.

So when I was about 20, I was already running races of 60 or 70 kilometers sometimes. I trained more than a hundred kilometers a week with running, I could run a marathon in less than three hours. And it was, and that was a great accomplishment. When I accomplished that I did it through hard work, which I'm going to describe now. And I also became, after I stopped running, I still really worked on my body and my body became a real source of confidence for me because people are going to get lots of compliments on my physical fitness and how my body was. So it became part of my identity and I worked out consistently because of that. It was hard work and with the hard work I actually improved and it was from that hard work and the achievement of goals that happened through that hard work that I started for the first time in my life to really work hard on my job, on my intellectual work with language and my next achievements took place whether it was learning languages or becoming a very successful, in my opinion, a very successful linguist.

And this happened again through, I became a good linguist and I became, I wrote a very, very good thesis for my PhD. And I wrote a good, good articles through my understanding of the fact that things don't come easy and that you need to work hard, you need to really put a lot of effort in to reach great things. But also my knowledge that I have the capacity if I put the work in to achieve great things. I'm going to talk about this process recently. So again, I had started English by Dr. Cooper. I had gotten married, my life had changed a lot. There were a lot of new stresses and because of that I think I started to let myself go physically. And I realized for a couple of years that the Cooper that I'm used to who can, you can see all my abdomen muscles, my six pack, we say, my six pack, were all my muscles and very little fat and people complimenting me and me feeling good about the clothes I wore.

Or me feeling good about not wearing any clothes and feeling like an athlete besides everything else, feeling strong. And feeling young. I started to lose this with English by Dr. Cooper because I felt like I had to put all of my effort into the business and I wound up working less and less. And maybe for more than a year, I've been telling my students, and I have been telling myself I'm going to change things, I'm going to change things. I'm going to go back to how I always was working out hard. Well, here comes the problem, which is the same for somebody learning a language. It's developing a habit. So it was hard for me, whenever we try to do something that we're not used to doing. And whenever we, and that's hard. And that requires effort and concentration and it's not part of our routine. It takes effort, it takes consistency and it takes willpower. And we have to develop a habit that we don't have, it's hard.

So I'll talk about my running first and then I'll get back to language. So for a long time I tried, I was half dedicated to getting in shape and I made myself work out more and I made myself run more, but I couldn't quite get into the habit I was in, in the old days. So I would some days, I would make, some weeks I would make an excuse and I would work out once or I would not work out at all and I wouldn't work out as hard. And this happened for about a year until about five weeks ago and five weeks ago, I don't know what clicked, but I remember saying to Christina, "Christina, no matter what I'm going to work out four days a week." And I said, "I'm going to get back to the person I was." And actually I think what clicked was I gave myself a challenge which had to do with running. I said, "Cooper, you're going to be a great runner again. You're going to get times that will be competitive in races."

And the main, and five weeks, it's only been five weeks. And five weeks ago I began working out and the first thing I told myself was the first rule that I tell you guys in terms of learning English, be consistent. No matter what, work out hard at least three times a week and probably four times a week. And remember, okay, you want to be a good runner, you want to be a fast runner, don't worry at first if you're running, if your times-, I started route running a seven mile run. And I said, "Don't worry if at first your times aren't good, because if you can remember what you know, if you consistently put effort in every day, or three or four days a week, you are times will get better and better. And in terms of your physical fitness, your fat, you'll lose fat and you'll gain muscle."

So I started running and my first run of this length was one hour and nine minutes. And I was very positive, which I think is very important. So I didn't worry and say, "Oh, one hour and nine minutes, there's so many people who could run faster. There were people who ran and passed me. I'm so old, I can't run anymore." I didn't have this idea, which is the same idea people have when they learn English. "Oh my God, it's so hard. I'm going to give up." You don't give up at the beginning because you just started and you should realize you have to continue and be consistent and then the results will come. I realized that from my experience in the past. So I continued and my next run I ran faster and this running faster, just made me positive, it was something I could cling to and say at this point there was a positive development that gave me confidence. I would compare it to you guys. So you're learning English and you can't speak English yet. Just like I was running and I couldn't run fast yet.

And instead of thinking about all the things you've learned, a lot of students are negative and they think about other things they still have to learn. Well, when I started to get better in my running, rather than think about all of the ways, about how slow I was still compared to what I want, what used to be or what I wanted to be, I thought about the fact that I was better than the last time. And this was enough for me. Now, when you're running, when you're trying, and you're trying, the most important thing is to be consistent. You know, and it wasn't just running, it was also lifting weights for my body. You know, that the main thing is to keep doing it. To keep doing it, to not stop doing it. That means you can't make excuses. You can't say, "Oh, well this week I'm tired. Well, it was a hard week. Well, I lost some students, or my website isn't going very well, I have to work on that." You can't make excuses.

You have to be dedicated and you have to say, "No matter what, no matter what, I am going to be consistently working out. I don't care what happens." When you gain that motivation, it's something psychological but it's something very simple. In other words, this year, these last five weeks aren't any different, they are okay. They're a little bit easier than last year, but I'm still working very hard. I still have a lot of responsibilities that could get in my way and get in the way of my concentration. But I ignore them and I continue. Now these last five weeks, I've said, "Okay, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what those problems you have are, you're going to run and then you're going to go back to those problems. Or you're going to lift weights and you're going to go back to those problems. And when you run or when you lift weights, you're going to do-, go as hard. You're going to challenge yourself to work hard." And this was what was lacking for the last two or three years. And what I have now, I haven't accepted the excuses.

And more important comes the second rule. So the first rule is really being consistent. The second rule is being positive. It's holding on to your improvements and not thinking about all the things you need to do, not worrying about what you don't know, but being happy about what you do know or what the improvements you've made to your body since you began. But the third rule is pushing yourself as much as you can for improvements. And so this is something that I know that I naturally do, whether it be with learning languages or whether it be with my work or with working out and with running. So naturally I began to push myself and I've begun to push myself. How did I do that? Well, I started running. I ran about 22 kilometers one day. Why did I do it? I said,

"Okay, I'm going to take advantage of this day. I'm going to run 22 kilometers, I don't care how fast I go because I know that running 22 kilometers is a good way to improve your speed and your fitness even if you don't run very quickly."

And so I run at a normal speed, I didn't try to get a good time, but this was one way of pushing myself. Another way of pushing myself is I changed the seven mile run, I changed the way I ran. So I had been running what you call intervals, which was a minute. In my case I was running two minutes fast, one minute slow, two minutes fast, one minute slow, two minutes fast, one minute slow. And I changed my, I pushed myself harder. I said, "You know what Cooper? This time you're going to run the seven mile run and you're going to run as fast as you can for all seven miles actually." So seven miles is about 11.25 kilometers. And I said, no, actually, I didn't say that, but I said, "The middle of the run, the middle eight kilometers, you've got to run as fast as you can. You're not going to do intervals. You're not going to do two minutes fast, one minute slow. You're going to run everything fast." And this made a huge improvement.

Both the long runs and deciding to run as fast as I could the whole way through made a huge improvement. And that only happened because I said to myself, "You got to keep pushing yourself. You have to keep trying to go harder and harder." And when I did this, my times went up and my body, at this point I started to notice in my body major improvements a lot less fat and more muscle. Because I was also at the same time going to the gym, lifting weights and going harder. Well, as I say, effort brings results. The effort doesn't have to be immediate, the effort can be something that with consistency what you've been doing becomes easy. So you push yourself to do something harder. When you push yourself to do something harder, then might see results and those results are very important, recognizing those results.

So for me it was easy. I could recognize my results in my run because my time was getting better and better. I could, it was not, it's not as easy to recognize the results in your body at first, because you want to say, "Ah, I don't think I'm getting better. I feel more muscles in my abdomen, but I don't know if I'm getting better. It looks like my fat is getting smaller, but I'm not sure." But I would see results and these results would push me further. And again, it's the same thing about being positive. Rather than worrying that my body, it didn't look the same as it's looked, it looked four years ago when I thought that it was perfect. Maybe I was wrong, but that's what I thought. I didn't compare myself to somebody who is perfect, I compared myself to how I was and I saw that it was better and this gave me more fuel, more [Portuguese 00:19:05], more fuel to continue to get better. And obviously my time started getting better.

So you get to a point where you've, my first hour and nine minutes became 59 minutes. And you say, "Wow, I've improved 10 minutes," and this is where you get a new, oh, and you see your body and your body looks pretty good. And this is where you come to the next problem, which is becoming complacent or [Foreign Language 00:19:37]. Now I see this a lot with my students. So my students come to me, they eventually, they see that I want them to push themselves and they begin to push themselves and they are consistent and they go to more classes, they look at the website, etcetera, and they get

to a different level. I can think of many of my students who have done that, they've gained a different level. But then they become complacent.

Many of my students have improved, it's impressive. And then they've just, rather than continue to push themselves to work even harder to do more things, to maybe watch a few movies a week or analyze language, practice it more, write more, read more, they become complacent to keep doing the same thing. Or maybe they work less hard. Now I didn't do that. So after about two weeks ago, I saw improvements. It made me happy. Now, like everybody else, I want the work, the pain to stop. A part of me says, "Okay, enough, you can relax now." But another part of me says, "No, you set yourself a goal," In your case it's being fluent in English. In my case, it's being a very, very good runner. One that's competitive in national races, in my case, it's having the body I had three or four years ago. I'm not there yet, so I have to keep going and keep creating challenges and I've done that.

How have I done that? Well, basically the motivation, it's keeping my mind on my final goal and knowing that I haven't gotten there, but at the same time being confident that I can because of the improvement I've made. So last week, about 10 days ago I made a run, which was as fast as I could go, but instead of being 12 kilometers, it was 15 kilometers. So it was a hard, much harder challenge. But I accepted the challenge, I did the challenge. I pushed myself to be able to do that challenge. And after I did that challenge, I was very tired. It hurt, but it improved my running, it improve my running so much that in the last week I got my best time, which is 52 minutes. Okay? So that's an improvement of 17 minutes and it's getting closer to my goal. I'm actually running at this point fast. I could already do decently in a race, but I'm not where I want to go. I'm not where I want to go. I want to get to under 45 minutes for 12 kilometers, and then I want to improve my run to even further.

I want to make, I want to get a certain time for a half marathon. That's my goal right now, a half marathon time of 85 minutes, which even now seems impossible, but although it seems impossible, I know that if I'm consistent, if I keep pushing myself and I don't make excuses and I don't become complacent, I will get there. As far as my body goes, my body has really changed. I'm sitting here now writing this audio diary and I'm aware that again, I can wear a shirt or a T-shirt and jeans and walk down the street and people will say, "Hey, he has a good body." I know this seems conceited, vain to you, but it's very important for me because it helps my self-confidence and it's important for my videos to feel more confident. It's important from everything I do to feel more confident. And I think, I think that's, I know that's why.

Now that I, and I have developed the habit, now that I have developed the habit so much that if I don't run fast or if I don't work, go to lift weights this week it will feel bad. It will feel bad not to go because I've developed the habit. Now that I've developed the habit, I can't let myself go. I can't let that go to waste. I have to continue to build on it and I will, who knows how far I'll go, who knows? But I know if I'm consistent I'll keep getting better than I am now. So what happens? It's interesting. So what happens when you say, when I improve my body and when I improve my running time is, it carries over to other aspects of my life. So, okay, I feel younger. I don't feel so worried about my age

anymore. How does this help me? Well, it helps me with my relationship with Christina, I'm more secure. It helps my self-image and because of that, I have more confidence in my work.

I have more confidence in doing new things and that's the ultimate achievement to become really not just to improve my body and to prove my running ability, but to improve my life. And it's there. It's not, but it's there, but it can't be complacent. It's only been five weeks, that's not enough, of course. For you guys talking about English, it's the same thing. Okay? You need to develop the habit of going to class. You need to develop the habit of going to other classes, of looking at the website, of thinking, of creating a vocabulary list, of looking at the vocabulary list, of practicing and you need to be positive. And remember the next week that you understand when I speak in English a little bit more, that you know more words than before, you recognize words before. So you have to give yourself a chance to see these results by paying attention to movies that you watch or audio diaries or short dialogues or anything in English.

And by paying attention to the fact that things are becoming easier, that you've learned these new words or these new expressions. They used to seem strange for you, now they seem easy for you. You need to use that as fuel. And then you need to say, "You know what? I'm going to make it harder for me. This time I'm going to listen, I'm going to try to transcribe the short dialog and I'm not going to look. And I'm going to see how I do. And then I'm going to compare it, or I'm going to watch a whole movie without subtitles, or I'm going to listen to Dr. Cooper's videos, the same video every other day for two weeks in a row." Or some other projects that you have that's a little bit harder than what you've been doing. Okay? And you want to do it because you know how good it feels that you've already improved and you want to improve more.

If you keep doing that, if you keep pushing yourself, if you keep being consistent, you will reach a higher level and when you reach that higher level you have to first be happy about it. You can't think about, "Oh well, I still want to get better." You have to say, "I've gotten this far. It's great, it shows my power, it shows the importance of effort." And then you can't be complacent, you can't be [inaudible 00:27:56], you have to keep going because you want to be fluent. And you have to realize, if I've gotten this far now, if when I started with Dr. Cooper, I couldn't say a sentence in English correctly and now I can even understand Dr. Cooper. Okay? If now I can understand some, I can watch TV and understand some things and I couldn't before. Okay? Think about that and then think about how you're going to feel if you become fluent. And then think about, and then remember, trust me, when you do become fluent, it's going to change everything.

It's going to change how you feel about yourself as a human being, it's going to be a great accomplishment that's going to show you, "Oh, you know, I can do a lot of things in life." It's going to, besides that, it's going to open up a lot of different opportunities for you by knowing English, especially having access to all of the different information that's online in English. Okay? And from there you'll feel better about yourself and other aspects of your life will improve. So I hope you liked this audio diary today, thanks for listening.