

The Runner's Guide to the Meaning of Life

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Cited by Runner's World magazine as one of the best books ever written on running, *The Runner's Guide to the Meaning of Life* reveals as much about reaching your full potential as it does about sport. Boston Marathon winner Amby Burfoot, one of running's wisest voices, presents 15 life lessons about passion, courage, materialism, failure, and regeneration, all learned during his more than 35 years of experience in running. He discusses a runner's essential traits-qualities necessary for everyone striving to reach a long-term goal-as well as the writing, music, and quotes that have continually inspired him. Most important, Burfoot explains that winners are not those who cross the finish line first, but those who discover more about themselves with every step.

The Runner's Guide to the Meaning of Life

What 35 Years of Running Has Taught Me about Winning, Losing, Happiness, Humility, and the Human Heart

On Finding Your Path

"I have learned that there is no failure in running, or in life, as long as you keep moving. It's not about speed and gold medals. It's about refusing to be stopped. You might find that one particular direction proves difficult, but there are many directions on a compass. Infinite, in fact. As long as you keep searching, you'll find your way."

On Creativity

"Sometimes my main reason for running is simply to see where my brain will go while my body is meandering through the local trails or roadways. It can never be predicted, and it's always a surprise."

On The Need For Traditions

"In a world that perpetually moves faster, never slower, we need all the anchoring points we can find. Chaos erupts spontaneously in our spinning lives. It's the center of the wheel that we need to focus on more often."

On Bouncing Back

"Losing isn't contagious. It's not a fatal condition, and it's not forever. It's more like a cold that makes you miserable for a week but then goes away, and you're fine."

On Goals

"When in the mountains enjoy the mountain scenery. Nobody achieves his goal without having some fun along the way. Without fun, we'd give up long before the finish line. If there's any way to make the road easier and enjoyable, I'm all for it."

On Starting Fresh

"Life goes on, day after day, but it also has the ability to reinvent itself, to start over. This is what the seasons show us. We all have marveled at the apple tree's ability to rest through a dark, cold winter, then to grow new leaves in the spring, to blossom again, to bear fruit. We don't often think of our own lives this way, but I think we should."

About the Author

A lifelong runner and running advocate, Amby Burfoot has been executive editor of Runner's World magazine since 1985. In 1968, he won the Boston Marathon, the first American to do so in 11 years. He is the author of *The Principles of Running* and *Runner's World Complete Book of Running*.

Amby Burfoot won the Boston Marathon in 1968 and joined *Runner's World* ten years later. He became executive editor in 1985, and he held the position for twenty years before retiring in 2013. Amby has run 110,000 miles in his lifetime and owns the US's longest active "race road streak," having completed the Thanksgiving Day 5-mile run in Manchester, Connecticut, fifty-five years in a row. Currently a writer at-large for *Runner's World*, he has been honored by numerous running organizations both as an athlete and as a writer. Now in his early seventies, he continues running up to thirty miles a week.

Other Books

The Runner's Book of Haiku. This year marks the fiftieth year of my involvement in the sport of long-distance running. Looking back, I guess it started with a present under the Christmas tree in 1967. I was twelve years old. And inside a brightly wrapped box with ribbon and bow was a pair of Onitsuka Tiger training shoes. My parents found them on sale at the local weed and feed store, which just happened to carry shoes, for twelve dollars. They were white with blue and red piping. At the time, they were the fanciest pair of sneakers I'd ever seen. I slipped them on my feet and found the shoes to my liking. Somewhere between presents and turkey dinner, I got the notion in my head to try the shoes out. I decided to run twelve times around our block, one loop for every year I was old. Thus began my running career. I never looked back. Little did I know, at the time, that the sport of distance running would take me around the world as an athlete and a coach. At the time, I also didn't realize the personal journey I would undergo. It has become a journey of mind, body, and spirit. Like life, it has been a journey of setbacks and successes. And somewhere along the way, my passion for running and writing merged. The late Dr. George Sheehan, author of *Running & Being*, stated, "There are times when I am not sure whether I am a runner who writes, or a writer who runs. Either way, writing has become my way of preserving and making sense of running experiences. Each daily journey—whether it be running the forests, mountains, beaches, farmlands, deserts, towns, or rural neighborhood—has provided inspiration for my writing. Other passions in my life have come and gone, but the pure joy of my breath, heartbeat, and footfall intermingling with the landscape has remained. I am now, and will always be, a runner. In their own way, this collection of over one thousand haiku tells a bit about myself, my life, and what I have come to know through the sport. There is something here for everyone passionate about long-distance running."

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