



Final Report

Team World Vision

Employee and Runner Research and Strategy

November 14, 2013

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Executive Summary

Project Background & Objectives

Team World Vision identified an opportunity to uncover the reasons people run, with a goal of deepening its understanding of why people choose to run for charity, for Team World Vision specifically, and why they choose to run again. In order to drive greater first-time and repeat runner participation, as well as to develop a plan of action, Team World Vision recognized that a deeper understanding of the emotional drivers and motivations of runners would be necessary. To attain this understanding, 31 Emotional Inquiry interviews with Team World Vision runners were conducted in Schaumburg, IL and Chicago, IL on August 26th and 27th, 2013.

Additionally, Team World Vision desired a better understanding of how Team World Vision and its parent organization, World Vision, look and behave at their best. Additionally, they sought to define the relationship between World Vision and Team World Vision. In doing so, they hoped to position Team World Vision for future growth while staying true to its DNA and the parent brand's DNA. Between July 25th and 30th, 2013, nineteen (19) Appreciative Inquiry interviews were conducted by phone with Team World Vision staff, World Vision staff with deep knowledge of Team World Vision, and World Vision staff without deep knowledge of Team World Vision. At the conclusion of the interviews, researchers synthesized their findings with Team World Vision staff present.

On September 23rd, 2013, Brandtrust held a work session with Team World Vision and World Vision staff at Brandtrust's offices in Chicago, IL in order to internalize, synthesize and prioritize the findings from the studies. These learnings were then leveraged in strategic exercises, the outputs of which are captured in this report.

Top Insights

The following list serves as a consolidated summary of the key insights from both Appreciative Inquiry and Emotional Inquiry. Full report is on the following pages.

Deciding To Run

1. People decide to run for Team World Vision because they are personally called by God to do something in the face of global injustice, and they believe that World Vision is the right organization to facilitate immediate action.
2. When people decide to run, it is always a balance of selfish and selfless. They are often looking for running to assist in healing inner conflicts and pain.

The Team World Vision Experience

3. Team members love the fact that they get to be a part of a team and benefit tremendously from the way the mission is carried out in relational community.
4. Fundraising is a scary and isolating part of the Team World Vision experience and evokes fear, insecurity and self-doubt.
5. During training, runners experience a suffering that connects them to the suffering of those without clean water and adds validity to their personal fundraising appeal.

Running Again

6. Those who run again are called to take the next step as a leader, seeking to inspire the next generation of the team.
7. Those who run again are looking to up the ante, creating for themselves a next level challenge to differentiate their experience and give their fundraising appeal an edge.

Strategic Recommendations

The following list serves as a consolidated summary of Brandtrust's recommendations and is a synthesis of the work done in the work session. For further detail on these recommendations, please see p.13.

1. Build the experience of *being called* into the communications strategy, beginning with the initial pitch and extending to the personalized pitch to run again.
2. Convey at all points across the TWV journey the direct impact team members are having on the very real global need, leveraging the strength of World Vision's reputation.
3. Shamelessly promote and celebrate any communal expressions of Team World Vision. Develop strategies to enfold members without an opportunity for a local team to have a virtual team experience.
4. Develop a thorough fundraising plan that draws from the strengths of the broader Team World Vision experience in order to reduce the fear and insecurity fundraising evokes.
5. Collect and broadly share TWV stories of victories within World Vision, with potential team members, and with existing team members.
6. Develop a more robust returning runner strategy with clear touch points and personalized asks, to invite them to take the next step in their World Vision experience.
7. Implement a staff training and development plan to ensure long term sustainability and scalable program growth.

Recruitment Profiles

Brandtrust recommends that the following statements drive communications and strategy for the two primary audiences.

First Time Runners

For those called by God to respond to global injustice, Team World Vision provides an opportunity to join a local team bringing tangible solutions to real needs, confirmed in the stories of personal change and global impact.

Returning Runners

For those desiring to deepen their commitment to personal and global impact, Team World Vision provides the support needed to develop as a leader, and the community with which to celebrate more lives changed.

Appreciative Inquiry Findings

Key Insights: Appreciative Inquiry

The following section captures synthesized insights from the Appreciative Inquiry research with Team World Vision and World Vision staff. Together with the Emotional Inquiry insights, these will serve as important foundations that will inform both the messaging communications as well as strategic tactical recommendations for Team World Vision moving forward.

A. WORLD VISION AT ITS BEST

World Vision Embodies Rigor And Professionalism

From the outside looking in, it would be easy to lump any Christian non-profit into a group defined by a high degree of passion, but little understanding of what it takes to make it from a business perspective. World Vision as an organization defies this generalization. Employees are thoroughly impressed with the organization's high degree of professionalism, business acumen, and understanding of the problem it is working to solve. Being part of this kind of culture is deeply fulfilling and reassures them that they are part of an organization that will help them fulfill a higher calling.

World Vision Delivers Substantial Global Progress

World Vision employees believe that World Vision makes the greatest impact among all global humanitarian organizations. Seeing the change firsthand, World Vision employees have tremendous belief in the organization's ability to leverage the right people with the right knowledge and resources to do the most good. World Vision helps employees feel they are living out a calling they were gifted to live, collectively demonstrating excellence in all that they do.

World Vision Is About Empowering With Hope

Of all the good that World Vision does, employees cite providing hope as the most important of them all. Providing hope is like tilling the soil, readying it to be planted for a future harvest. Without hope, none of the other sustainable things that World Vision provides will be able to take root or grow. This hope allows World Vision to equip and teach others how to care for themselves, truly transforming the communities it touches.

B. TEAM WORLD VISION AT ITS BEST

Team World Vision Extends Invitations To Transformation

Team World Vision invites people into a process of transformation both for the poor being served and for the runners. These transformations are multi-faceted. They are physical, emotional and spiritual in nature, and they are life-long. People leave the Team World Vision experience forever changed, believing they can accomplish more than they once realized, and realizing there is much more to be accomplished for the poor than they once believed. The transformation that runners undergo is more powerful because it is shared – with their training partners, their fundraising partners, and ultimately, with the communities that receive clean water.

Team World Vision Ignites Impossible Dreams

For many, running a marathon feels as daunting as helping destitute people halfway around the world, but the emotional and tactical support that runners receive along the journey makes them believe that the impossibilities of both challenges can be overcome. Team World Vision helps people believe they can accomplish something much bigger and more sustainable than anything they could do on their own.

Team World Vision moves people to ambition and to fulfill the most far off of aspirations. Whether it's running a marathon or something even greater, the challenge to stretch beyond perceived limitations helps individuals as well as the larger Team realize success beyond what was once thought possible. This drive is credited broadly to the entire Team World Vision leadership, noted for their passion, optimism, and integrity.

The Right Kind Of Revolutionary

Team World Vision pushes boundaries and possesses a spirit of entrepreneurialism. Though this varies from the more conservative, corporate culture of the mother organization, it has served Team World Vision well. As the organization seeks to grow, this attitude of risk-taking and fearless passion must not be lost, and should be sought in or taught to new members of the team.

Team World Vision is also revolutionary with its servant attitude, demonstrated in its ability to equip participants. The

team models community in everything it does and teaches participants to do the same.

The Strength Of Being Relational

Team World Vision bonds people to one another and to a global mission with a depth that is difficult for World Vision to accomplish at a similar scale. However, in order to continue to drive ongoing engagement with its mission, Team World Vision must explore additional ways to keep people engaged relationally beyond the finish line.

From Unreachable To Advocate

Team World Vision exposes World Vision to a harder-to-reach group of potential donors. This group appears to be a different demographic than those who are reached through more traditional fundraising or missions programs. It is also cited as being an effective tool for evangelism. Because participating with Team World Vision is such an immersive experience, people walk away with a better understanding of their powerful impact in service of the poor.

From World Vision's perspective, Team World Vision serves as an entrée for World Vision to engage churches with which it does not currently have relationships. Additionally, Team World Vision participants have become some of the most vocal and motivated ambassadors for World Vision because of their Team World Vision experience.

C. OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

1. **Make signing up easier for participants.** Remove a seemingly small but taxing step to registration by making it available online.
2. **Innovate on next-level connections with runners.** Extend the relationship with participants beyond the finish line.
3. **Replicate the Chicago experience in other locations.** Leverage best practices in Chicago, identify ambassadors in other markets and reproduce the experience.
4. **Implement a support structure to enable growth.** Concern exists over how long the entrepreneurial energy alone will sustain the movement.
5. **Develop a plan for how Team World Vision will continue to “grow up” within the parent organization.** This must be done without losing the essence of what makes Team World Vision flourish.
6. **Tell more stories more frequently within World Vision.** Everyone should know about Team World Vision and its role, and leadership should consider participating in some form.
7. **Improve positioning regarding Team World Vision's role in the larger World Vision story.** Include messages specific to all other programs addressing how Team World Vision relates to and supports their goals.
8. **Identify and message points of difference from other charity running programs.** Many churches believe they already do what TWV provides.

Emotional Inquiry Findings

Key Insights: Emotional Inquiry

The following pages capture synthesized insights from the Emotional Inquiry research with Team World Vision runners. Together with the Appreciative Inquiry insights, these will serve as important foundations that will inform both messaging communications as well as strategic tactical recommendations for Team World Vision moving forward.

A. DECIDING TO RUN FOR TEAM WORLD VISION

Water Is Fundamental To Human Life

Amidst massive global problems, water is an undisputed asset for survival and seen as a basic right for all people. While runners acknowledge that causes such as cancer research are noble and good, clean water possesses an immediacy and tangibility that research lacks. When people first hear Team World Vision's invitation, the ability to make a real and quantified impact motivates their participation. Water's simplicity speeds the response time for those describing their sense of calling from God to join Team World Vision.

Eyes Wide Open To Global Injustice

Inspired by the conviction that all humans are designed and loved by an all-powerful God, runners sign up as a way to do something in response to the inequities they see in the world. Bringing water to a community without is a concrete way to restore dignity and express the call to justice they are motivated by but often ill-equipped to act on.

Invited To Join The Global Community

For first time runners Team World Vision successfully represents those who have responded to God's call of justice, and are on the front lines living out their faith. There is a sense when runners join the team, that they are stepping onto a bridge that exists between their world and the developing world; a bridge of investment and opportunity that will successfully deliver hope and water to those in need. In addition to the global community, Team World Vision runners step into an intense local community where they develop new friendships, expand networks, and become part of a team with a mission larger than themselves.

Running Carries The Promise Of Healing The Broken

Many runners described their awareness that they lead complex lives with burdens often too intense to bear. When they are invited to run for a cause as simple as water, and see the corresponding potential personal benefits (weight loss, self-discipline, health advances, etc.), they step forward in the hope that this experience will be an agent of healing and change in their lives.

For as much as joining Team World Vision is a selfless act, it is also selfish in the best of ways. The giving is intentionally and joyfully reciprocal: Runners sign up knowing they will give, but also believe firmly that they will be recipients of untold gifts.

B. FUNDRAISING: THE SOLITARY RACE

Fundraising Is A Race All Its Own

At some point along the journey of their training, runners turn to the work of fundraising. Unlike the excitement of running, and without the community of the group runs, fundraising happens alone and evokes unique emotional pain and conflict. The runner is most commonly in isolation at their computer, paralyzed by the daunting task ahead.

The Fear Of Judgment

Fundraising introduces the risks of rejection and of being seen as the type of person who cannot sustain oneself independently; a needy person. Engaging potential donors awakens dormant insecurities and creates self doubt that the runner can be a successful member of Team World Vision.

Leaning On The Strength Of Story

The tool that most consistently moves runners beyond fear and into advocacy is the ability to tell a good story. Inspired by the stories of Team World Vision staff and fellow runners, fundraising becomes an opportunity to tell a story that is both personal and global. The successful fundraiser begins to identify and architect a narrative that will captivate potential donors.

Chapter One: Water

The ability to point to a concrete problem with a relatively simple and proven solution motivates the fundraiser from inertia to action. They see their role evolving at this stage to be an advocate, tasked with raising awareness for a global issue that has tangible and proven solutions. The metrics provided by Team World Vision enable fundraisers to invite donors to very specific goals, and allow donors the reward of making a tangible impact themselves. The fundraiser's story in this way moves away from their personal need, and begins with the immense global need for clean water.

Chapter Two: The Runner

Successful fundraisers choose to expose some of the vulnerabilities they are experiencing along the journey. Whether they are new to running, new to the marathon or experiencing the discouragement of a training injury, these angles are shared as a way to add inspirational value. In this task, fundraisers are developing their own personal support base, made up of virtual fans who will both be inspired and instrumental in helping to inspire the runner along the road to the marathon.

The Milestones: Each Donation Received

The fundraising race is one without clear mile markers, and fundraisers feel a bit lost or aimless along the way. For this reason, each donation received becomes a little reminder that the fundraiser has reached another milestone in their fundraising race. This adds to their confidence, confirms their decision to join Team World Vision, and fuels the next leg of the fundraising race.

C. THE TEAM WORLD VISION EXPERIENCE

Community Makes Training Survivable

While runners often sign up as a response of their heart, their head catches up when the rigor of training sets in. The most consistent mitigating factor for the pain of training is the strength of the community. The group runs become highlights of the week and the relationships formed during those runs

become uniquely affirming and sustaining aspects of the Team World Vision experience.

Embodied Good

Runners realize something profound throughout their marathon training: that they can identify both with God and with the poor as they suffer alongside them. The pain of training becomes a way for them to join in solidarity with those who have to run and walk miles each day simply to have clean drinking water. It also becomes a way to better understand the suffering and pain that Jesus experienced. The suffering, though not ultimate, confirms for them that they are doing something noble. It stands above the easier path of simply giving money to solve a problem. It welcomes them into the fullness of what is true charity and true religion.

Delightfully Larger Than Myself

Team World Vision welcomes runners into the larger world of the marathon community and the beauty that is unique within the running culture. What most resonates is the true democracy they witness. Participants are young and old, men and women, large and small, fit and fragile and of multiple cultures and colors. Runners enjoy the spirit of sharing, encouragement and perseverance that is unique to the marathon community, and embrace it as a best version of themselves and often their faith.

The Gift Of Amnesia

Similar to giving birth, runners describe their forgetfulness regarding the pain of the actual marathon, embracing the victory of finishing and the corresponding and communal glow post-race.

D. DECIDING TO RUN AGAIN

Failing To Become Un-enlightened

Those runners who decide to run again were deeply affected both by the marathon experience, and the mission of Team World Vision to provide water to those in need. They are eager to commit again because they cannot “un-see” what they have now seen. Once the severity of injustice has been acknowledged, Team World Vision provides the perfect way do one's part in alleviating it.

The Reframed Identity

Those runners who decide to run again were successfully embedded into the Team World Vision community. They were affected by the team spirit, the team colors and uniforms, and the impact to their social life and network of friends. What may have begun as an individual call is now re-imagined as a communal call, as they have become part of something much larger than themselves.

From Inspired To Inspiration

Many who run again indicate the joy of being called to step into greater levels of leadership within their local team of Team World Vision. Having been inspired, they are now seeking to inspire, whether that is through official or unofficial roles; as coaches, “social chairs,” encouragers of first timers, giving a pre-group run talk, or any number of other opportunities.

Upping The Ante

Repeat runners consistently indicate that in subsequent races, they create for themselves more advanced goals than their first race. Whether it be more rigorous training, a faster time, traveling internationally or running multiple races, adding to the “story” becomes important both for personal motivation and as a new angle for fundraising strategies. This helps runners feel the connection to suffering in a fresh way and becomes the rationale when reaching out to donors again.

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic Recommendations

After review of the key insights from research as well as the output from our work session exercises, Brandtrust offers the following recommendations for Team World Vision moving forward.

1. Develop a strategy that leverages *personal calling*, beginning with the initial pitch and extending to the personalized pitch to run again.

- Research and communicate parallels from the biblical text of relevant stories of call.
- Build calling into the communications plan at every touch point along the journey.
- Invite runners to identify the nature of that call and to share it with other teammates.
- Leverage their personal call as you seek to win them to return in future years.

2. Develop a communications strategy that spans the entire Team World Vision journey to convey the direct impact team members are having on the very real global need.

- Share progress reports of the work in the field.
- Focus on the work throughout the training journey.
- Intentionally gather stories from runners who have been to the field to add a personal touch.

3. Shamelessly promote and celebrate any communal expressions of Team World Vision. Develop strategies to enfold members without an opportunity for a local team to experience a virtual team experience.

- Consider expanding the strength of team rituals such as the orange uniform, the rally clap, etc.
- Investigate creatively incentivizing engagement in communal activities.
- Build the local team captain program.
- Invest in strategic year-round events to extend connections and deepen team loyalty.

4. Develop a thorough fundraising plan that draws from the strengths of the broader Team World Vision experience in order to reduce the fear and insecurity fundraising evokes.

- Coach new runners on storytelling strategy with World Vision impact metrics plus ideas for ways to personalize.
- Consider shifting the first incentive so that small (and early) victories are seen and celebrated.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of fundraising when providing training, pacing, accountability, mentors, etc.
- Provide small fundraising matches or virtual “awards” when different kinds of fundraising milestones are reached.

5. Collect and broadly share Team World Vision stories of victories both within World Vision, with potential team members, and with team members.

- Intentionally gather stories from runners who experience personal transformation, as well as from those who have been to the field.
- Aggressively recruit World Vision staff to run for Team World Vision to deepen awareness.
- Capture, publicize and track any new leads you create for World Vision.

6. Strengthen returning runner strategy with clear touch points and personalized asks, to invite them to take the next step in their World Vision experience.

- Consider shifting verbiage from “alumni” to “varsity” and provide ways to distinguish returning runners on the team (e.g. premium jerseys).
- Provide a breadth of next-level “up-the-ante” options to encourage all runners to run again.
- Set clear goals for field staff for returning runner recruitment.

7. Implement a staff training and development plan to ensure long term sustainability and scalable program growth.

- Consider hiring a less-entrepreneurial “COO” type to ensure consistent and clear operations as the program scales.
- Pursue World Vision mentors for each staff to build bridges with HQ and for staff growth.

Composite Narrative

Composite Narrative

This “composite transcript” was created using actual excerpts from the Emotional Inquiry interviews and reflects themes discovered over the course of the research project. The purpose of this composite transcript is not to describe the emotions of individuals and their stories, but to sketch out the emotional terrain and related dynamics at play in their journeys with Team World Vision. It is also a means of preserving the richness of the language people used to communicate their feelings about these experiences.

SECTION I. AT FIRST I WAS BLIND: DECIDING TO RUN FOR TEAM WORLD VISION

I was in my church service, and I was seeing a presentation. They began playing a video. It was vibrating, it was regular people running, showing why they run. It was building to a climax where they're saying, 'I run for Team World Vision.' The music hit one last note, and it pounded in my chest. A tear was running down my cheek, I was so moved. Michael Chitwood began talking and I was rocked. It was speaking to my heart. I had no choice. No way to shut it out. I was in a dark place at the time, just ended a relationship, my ex-fiancé. I'm feeling beat up and like I was unimportant and unloved, all these things. This reminded me it's not about me, but rather what I can do for other people. There are people who have far less than me and are happy. I take so much for granted. When we look at others' needs, our own needs are less all encompassing. The focus on self is a fleeting satisfaction. The experience of sharing is long lasting.

My eyes were opened. I don't know if it was the actual presentation or just the opportunity to make a difference, but the seed had been planted long ago when I went to my leadership program, and my heart was broken for the kids in Africa who walk for miles for water and the suffering that goes on there – the lack of resources and the injustice. It put an idea in my mind that the people in Africa, 18,000 miles from Chicago, are so similar to me. The major difference is that I was born in the United States as a white male with a lot of opportunity. And they were born in Africa without water. So I'm coming to the realization that every single person in this village was created by God in his likeness. It connected me in

a way that I wasn't connected before. Team World Vision represents the catalyst that allowed me to experience this moment. And at that moment I felt like I had a purpose. Everyone is always asking themselves, 'What am I here for? What am I supposed to do?' I feel like I was meant to see this message and obey my heart and do it. It's a good cause, and with my heart being broken I said, 'Why not run it?' God was talking to me and saying, 'You should do it'.

With Team World Vision there is a level of real, down-to-earth practicality. We can fix the problem. We just need resources. Then you can see, 'Here is the village before, now the well is in, here it is a year later. Look at what life is like. Kids aren't dying, they're starting to grow their own crops, they're better fed – good things are happening because of the practical stuff being done.' It would be wonderful to cure cancer, a fantastic, amazing thing, but we don't know when there will be a breakthrough, or how. Here it's guaranteed. You just need to drill deep enough to get to the water. It's so solvable. It's a way to make a difference in this world; I can make a difference in this world.

It's a call and a sacrifice for something much, much higher. It brings a sense of peace that this transcends you. It still benefits you in a certain way. The golden rule is, 'Do unto others as they would do unto you,' so there is a sense of reciprocity. There is recognition that these children are also in turn blessing you in that you have a purpose. But it's not about the run. Running is the small component. It's the mechanism for how all these things come together. Team World Vision for me symbolized the body of Christ.

And in that moment I felt like I could run it – even though I was never a runner. To combine getting fit and doing it for a good reason was really appealing to me. This was more concrete, with a team, a goal and deadline. But I was scared. At the meeting, after the presentation, it was clear that not everyone was a runner – some people were older, some overweight – it was reassuring. They said that anyone can do it, and I sort of believed them. It took a while to internalize it, but I thought if the 65-year-old can run a marathon, I can run a marathon. What I felt in the moment to put pen to paper was the sense of calling. Faith is not a choice that one makes.

Faith is something that is a gift from God. It's not an action you do but something that is given to you by God. I go back to the verse in James in that true religion is to care for the orphan and widow in their distress. Christ's love compels you to do good for others; to be involved in other people's situations. It's not just about that Christ died for my sins but about giving back the debt that I owe. Team World Vision allows me to do that, to care for the orphan or widow.

SECTION II. THE SOLITARY RACE: FUNDRAISING

The only reason I could think of for not joining the team is I didn't want to ask for money. But I thought it was worth stepping out of my comfort zone for. My first concern at the time was asking for donations. The idea is scary; I'm not an extrovert. How will I ask people? It's a bit intimidating. This is helping people who are less known, it's a less popular cause. People are aware of cancer, diabetes...but I felt like people are not even aware of this. I'm always for the underdog.

It feels like God's asking me to take a step of faith. So I'm able to commit to train and commit to doing the best I can to raise money, which is not an easy thing for me to do. It's hard to raise funds, I'm not a person who likes to ask favors, I don't like to be refused; I get offended. It also makes me sad, some of the things I hear. One comment stands out, someone said, 'Oh I did enough fundraisers in high school, I don't need to do that.' Like there is a quota! I feel like everyone will get a lot out of giving to others. It was a very selfish response. I hate hearing selfishness like that. We can all be that way sometimes, but I wish there was less selfishness in the world. They're choosing to remain ignorant and not give. That's aggravating and sad.

Charity running is interesting because you are raising money, but you are also raising awareness. There are people supporting you and the mission of the organization. The conversations you have, you have to let flow. You want people to be open and not threatened by a pitch. Fundraising is mostly about telling a story. It's like spreading the word. Trying to share with your listeners the needs within the story and how they might be able to impact the end of the story. It's easy to talk about what you're running for, it's tangible, I can give people numbers and pictures; it's not something that's

vaporous. It's not like we're trying to find a cure for something – not that that's bad – but this is concrete, they know where their money is going, it's water...something we can easily forget about but something that we all relate to.

Nobody likes to be put on the spot or feel pressured to do something they don't want to do. And I didn't want my friends and family to feel pressured into making a donation, but I believe in the cause so I decided that I should tell my story. I typed up an email about training and my back injury and how much their support and prayers would be with me. You have to be real honest and transparent. They don't want a mass-generated email. They want to know about you. The more honest and transparent you can be the more people will respond. It's important to let them know what that means to you personally. If it's important to me, I'm hoping they consider donating. It's using my challenge to inspire other people. In the end we get inspired, but we want to inspire. Fundraising is not fun. You look around and not everyone is rich. You are asking people to sacrifice. But if the cause is good, just, and convicting, people desire to participate in that. The whole experience taught me that you have to ask. The simple act of asking will give you results that you never thought. People I thought would support me didn't, and people who I didn't think would, did. I'm hoping and praying that I will get an email saying someone made a contribution. That's a great feeling, and I will take it with me on my next run.

SECTION III. FOR GOOD AND FOR GOD: RUNNING FOR TEAM WORLD VISION

After signing up for my first race, I decide to see what this running group is about. I remember doing the first two minutes, and it was hard. I'm looking at my watch and thinking that two minutes have never felt so long in my life. I'm feeling scared, worried about what I had gotten myself into. I remember thinking, 'If I can't run two minutes how am I going to run 26 miles?' But combined with my fear was knowing that there was a plan; that Team World Vision had helped another person learn to run before, and they were there to help me through it. It felt good to know they weren't just taking your money, but that you were part of a group or team. So when I'm running I imagine that every step that I take I am

giving clean water for children far away in Africa. I can use a race to give back, to make a difference.

On race day, it was mid-afternoon, and it was very hot. They announced it's in the red zone. It was hard, I was hurting. Looking at others around me, dripping in sweat, most of them looked like they're in pain, struggling. I'm not up front with the elite runners. As my knees and feet are hurting more and more to the point where it was unbearable, I kept remembering who I was running for, and they suffer the same kind of pains, whether physically or emotionally, on a daily basis. I can suffer through this one day for them. It made me cry while running, it hit me so hard that they deal with that stuff on a daily basis. Things are so cushioned in America. I wanted to feel that pain. Feeling that pain made life real and removed me from the things that are so easily taken for granted. I wanted to experience removal from comfort, get out of my comfort zone. Pain helps me become more self-actualized. I'm not tricking myself into just being comfortable here. I don't necessarily think running a marathon to fundraise is better than writing a check. But people are called to give in different ways. Writing a check seems to write it away as, 'Yeah, this was important, but not important enough to put myself out there.' Writing a check could sting you, but running a marathon will hurt. It's more tangible. You feel the pain. When you sacrifice and give when it hurts, that means so much more to those who are receiving, even if they never see you. You start to feel like you're not just giving money or time, but giving who you are.

Towards the end of the race I'm very tired, and I see an old man. He is running and stops and he has a sprain in his leg. I'm thinking to myself that I have to do this. If somebody like that can run for the children, then so can I. I had almost given up on the race. I was too tired. You have to be able to win over the little guy inside that says, 'I don't want to run, I don't feel like it.' I was envisioning a village of children running and shouting and excited about fresh water. I'm imagining I'm holding fresh water. They can't just wait for me to walk it over. They need me to run it to them. I had collected money, and I wanted to make the kids proud. And the man that was hurt gave me the boost. If he can do it, I can do it. I am doing something greater than myself.

People looked at my shirt and they would cheer me on. It's encouragement from all types of people – all races, ages and genders. Every ethnicity comes together to provide support. It's a good thing to see in a world where we live so divided. I imagine training for a marathon is like labor. It's the same kind of pain amnesia. Lots of bad words came out of my mouth during training, but when I crossed the finish line, I couldn't remember any of them. After the race we came together in the Team World Vision tent. I remember it being surreal. After you finish your first marathon you are in a state of shock. I remember seeing everyone celebrating the run and the accomplishments of raising money and what we had done physically. I remember feeling overwhelmingly proud. Knowing that it was more than what we had done with our bodies physically – more importantly it was the help we were bringing to people who needed it.

SECTION IV. AN ENLIGHTENED TRIBE: RUNNING FOR TEAM WORLD VISION AGAIN

After the first marathon was over I was thinking, 'Never again, never again'. Then a tickle in the back of my head starts. 'I raised this much this year, how much more could I do next time?' It eats at you: 'Did I fully devote myself? Did I do enough? Next time, I won't hold anything back. Wait. I just said next time!' Once you do it you have to up the ante and the difficulty level increases. Once you have that level you have to push yourself harder. But also, for me, running it again means being more honest and more vulnerable in telling my story to people and asking them to donate.

It's hard because I always say I won't do it again, but then as the months go on, I don't want to miss out on the group experience, I don't want to miss out on another season. I'm thinking, 'There's more work to be done, the problem hasn't been solved. I can help other people get a vision for that'. So that's part of my interest, too, helping people who go to my church, people who have not experienced need in their life and being able to make them see. Because once you see it, it's really hard to unsee it. If you look and see what's been done in communities where they don't have enough water, and it's a 10 year-old girl carrying that water, because the

boys are able to go to school, and the risks they take, you can't unsee that picture.

In 2011 I had helped lead the team, and Michael asked me to go to Kenya. He said, 'If you say yes to going to this race it will change your life, but if you say no you won't miss it.' We went to leave, we're in the airport, and I told Michael, 'This is it for me. I'm getting busy. The team at the church is great, but it's time to move on'. He said, 'Okay, I understand, but let's talk about it on the way home.' We got to Africa, and I got to the race, and after the race we went to the villages to see the work that they are doing and I realized I wasn't going to be able to stop. That's the moment that changed it from being special to personal. After going to Kenya it's more than just being a part of the organization, it becomes a part of who you are. That's what helped me take things to the next level. You see the poverty that people are living in across the world. To hear about it and read about it is powerful, but to be engulfed with it is a whole other level.

In the beginning I wasn't expecting the camaraderie that Team World Vision promotes for all of their runners. They have become like family to me. If you talk to the Team World Vision runners they really have these hearts that are really different. During the race, a lot of the slower runners are Team World Vision people and that's because they go in with their heart as opposed to their legs. It makes me happy to be involved. I like seeing people triumph. We all wear orange jerseys. Those are our colors. I see that bond. I'll always see somebody in an orange jersey and think, 'That is somebody that is on my team'. Even if I don't know them I can still talk to them. I'm excited when I think about the orange jerseys and the leaders every week that would come up and give us speeches and pump us up and bring us together. I think about all the good times I had and what was ahead of me. I feel refreshed, alive, energized to belong to a group. I'm looking forward to being with the same people that I ran with before and doing it for a great cause.

Now I'm running it again, I'm going back to inspire. I've had people running marathons now because they see me, and I kept saying if I can do it, you can. A couple friends joined Team World Vision. I'm excited; I recruited people! I made a

change. How small it is doesn't matter. It's nice to have an influence...It's nice to have an impact. Because I ran last year, I could just hit the ground running and enjoy training. I felt like a senior runner. It's great to share knowledge with people. It gives me more confidence in running. It was a perfect situation to jump in and be somewhat of a leader in Team World Vision.