

Wednesday, October 5, 2005

Balance

So this past weekend (Sept 25) I got to hang out with a couple hundred mountain bikers at the 24 hour race in Idyllwild. It was fun, difficult, demanding, stressful, and successful all in the same breath. Amazing to watch people sit on a bike for 24 hours or somewhere around 24 hours to see the determination and strength that people display. What an inspirational sight to see! Truly impressive! While I only competed in the 5 man 200+ age group, it was an experience to see the other riders out on the course. Although there is competitiveness, there is also a great amount of support for one another. On my fourth lap, around 7/8am, I headed out to the staging tent with all the highest hopes of turning in my fastest lap of the race, however, while eating my breakfast right before getting on the bike, I failed to realize that the body needs more time than 10 minutes to process food. Ignoring all signs of fatigue, I jump on my bike and headed up the first 2 miles climb, still with all the optimism that I initially had, I thought I could overcome my feelings of hunger and fatigue. By the time I hit the top of the climb and passed through the meadow, I could feel my body complaining about the punishment that I was putting it through and by the time I hit the next climb, my body was shutting down. I wound up walking up the rest of the climbs from that point on (this was not fun). By the time I got back to camp I could feel my racing was over. I was tired, dirty, hot, cold, and hungry. It was apparent that I'd had enough racing for one day. So that brings me to my latest entry, Balance. Since graduating, I've been trying to spend some time learning new things, I've been messing with Spring, Hibernate, Python, and PHP. In addition, I've been trying to do more social events (imagine that social events for a computer geek) and maintain somewhat physically fit. At any rate, my point is that I think there needs to be a Balance between all aspects of in my life. I quickly learned on that final lap of the race that I was just on the bike too damn much. I also feel the same with the computer at times. I'm trying to learn and satisfy my customers by sitting at the computer all day and then going home at night and continuing the process (this definitely causes some mental fatigue). I've often found myself walking up each climb, hoping that the finish line isn't far off. Unlike the 24 hour race, the computer just doesn't have a finish line. As soon as I finish the first 12 mile stretch, someone or something adds another 128 miles to course. Even though this is a different kind of track than the one I rode in Idyllwild, the idea is the same. It has to be tackled in small digestible portions. You know, "Divide and conquer". It can't be completed in one 24 hour sitting. Now I know what you're thinking, "It doesn't take rocket scientist to figure this out". Well your right, but my point is that computers can be the sole focus of us geeks. We tend to stare into the box and before you know it, the whole day has passed. You can't just sit in front of the box and expect to be creative, productive, and innovative (Well maybe you can, but I CAN'T). All of the development can't be mental, there has to be some physicality and emotion to the whole process. I mean how can you create something really worth while if you don't feel something for the project and experience something fresh and exciting. I think that's why I started mountain biking to begin with. Growing up in South Florida, besides the beach and the Keys, there wasn't much scenery. At least not like South California. Here (so cal) the weather is completely conducive to being outside, no bugs like So.Fla., and you can actually stand being outside in the heat, with trees and mountains. I've been checking Kathy's blog on Thinking Young, Keeping Sharp Edges, and the Devil's Advocate. WOW! Great stuff. So my point here is that too much of a good thing is NO GOOD! So the next time you're staring into the box and feeling tired, hungry and out of mental strength, TAKE A BREAK! You're probably walking up each climb and watching everyone else ride by you. (I'll add some additional technical information later. I just thought I had to get that off my chest after struggling up some of those climbs). Enjoy!

Posted by Brad Rippe at 11:35