

'Walking the Walk' Nepal 2009 ***(puff, puff, puff!)***

Discovering health benefits through an Occupational Challenge!

Ignition – A word from a latent Sadhu.

An employer sponsored invitation to “Who want to go trekking in Nepal?” combined with images of family slide nights (c1967) of Nepal resulted in a long overdue 'wake up message' about the need for a personal overhaul.

The 'SMART' Goal. The brave OT applied the theory to herself to discover 'what it feels like' to be rehabilitated from a sedentary life. The smart goal was declared in an essay to the employer as part of a sponsorship competition.

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Timed

The preparation... lessons applied and learned

- Training to improve aerobic capacity and endurance via walking, swimming, stair climbing, hill climbing; at least 45 minutes 4 times per week.
- Preparing for a 'low tech', spartan, culturally sensitive, environmentally sensitive journey – Reading, listening to stories
- Discovering ones motivators – not quite as one had first thought – (I did not win any sponsorship from my employer!!)
- Discovering 'self talk' to stay motivated
- Being brave
- Pacing and avoiding setbacks (holding back the greyhound!)
- Measuring progress using aerobic assessment
- Personal support - Where did it come from?
- Sourcing the right gear - boots, socks, poles, pack, medical kit, and sleep mat

The Doing

- Trekking at a high altitude.... sustained physical exertion for 6-7 hours per day at high altitude, pushing on, not giving up
- Volunteering to a remote, economically disadvantaged community... sharing the shovel... sharing the load... an exercise in practical caring
- Turning 'Off' the TV/ radio/ phone/ computer/ hot water / clean water/ flushing toilets/ light switches/ heaters/.....

The Health Benefits

- Improved BMI
- Improved alertness
- Improved life balance (i.e. leave work on time!)
- Improved stress management and mood management
- Mindfulness about the senses - tasting, breathing, seeing, floating, physical tiredness, breathlessness, fear, co-operation with people, personal safety, hygiene, eating at dusk, sleeping at dark, waking at dawn, elation.
- Vastly improved and sustained improved aerobic capacity.
- An example set to younger family members (Mum now has 'guns')
- Connection with other like minded international “strangers” now; “The Friends of Junbesi” to consolidate further benefits for their community.
- New goals for the future..... yes, they are achievable!

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