This is for all the Girls, Ladies, Women & Mothers who feel that appearances are not important after certain age in life. I am sure this article will appeal to all the Boys & Men (either married or single) also.

The story goes back to 21 years ago in my life. I was transferred to New Delhi office in my earlier company. I joined the office after my six months of maternity leave. I was new & had difficulty in talking in Hindi (as Tamil is my mother tongue), so by force my communication was restricted. Not many knew that I am married & have a kid. One day one of the guys walked up to me & said “I was about to propose to you & then I came to know that you are Sreekumar’s wife (Sreekumar, my husband, and I were both working in the same office) & have a kid also”. “Man mein laddu phoota” not because he was proposing to me but I was proud that I was able to maintain my body, health and fitness just after returning from maternity leave.

Years passed by, now I am entering an engineering college along with my elder son for the first day orientation. When I looked around, there were many parents but I was able to see a visible difference. “Man mein dusra laddu phoota”. Again the same feeling that I had 20+ years ago that I am still able to maintain myself. My son later told me that his friends, especially girls, admired me a lot for my long hair & for my looks.

Life is not always about taking care of your husband, children, family etc… while these are very important, we should also give importance to ourselves. My philosophy is life is: “If I am happy, I can keep others (whom so ever I mentioned earlier) happy”. But in the busy schedule we forget this & we all feel that we are doing a big sacrifice by ignoring this important fact. I have seen many ladies in our office who are young but sadly have not taken care of their health and appearances.

According to me, if we are healthy, we can achieve much more than what we do today. We will feel good about ourselves, we can feel the positive energy flowing inside us & we can impact our surroundings with positive vibes which in turn will create a good atmosphere all around.

Preaching is easy, Practicing is hard.

The secret of my success is that I always compete with myself as it’s said and I quote, *‘When you continuously compete with others you become Bitter, when you continuously compete with yourself you become Better.’*

So what should one do to be successful?

3 things are very important in life to be successful, be it to become:

* Best Developer
* Best Tester
* Run a Marathon
* Complete CPCU certification

They are in the order of priority

* Passion
* Discipline
* Skill

What motivated me to start running?

I always wanted to look fit, healthy, energetic, strong etc, etc…& others should always find it difficult to guess my age. Although in reality I know I am becoming old, I was finding a way in which I can achieve this. While I was talking to Satish Pillai (Our Coach in Mastek/Majesco), he told me that he runs Marathons. He was ready to teach if the employees were interested. This idea was taken up with Mastek Foundation.

How Mastek foundation run event helped me in preparation?

Mastek Foundation made my dreams come true by organizing training runs and giving an opportunity to run in Standard Chartered Marathon. They also provided necessary support for all the interested runners by arranging sessions taken by Satish who is a seasoned runner. We are thankful to Satish who gave his personal timing to teach us, motivate us & be along with us till we finished our runs during weekends. He also plays the role of a Doctor as we started sharing all our pains and injuries during our runs & he used to patiently listen & give advice. Mastek Foundation helped first time runners to get SCMM Bibs or else it is very costly (around Rs.20000/-). Thanks to Mastek Foundation for arranging Mastek Foundation Run through which Bibs are distributed & Vijay especially who used to always help us to achieve this. There are only few organizations who come up with such programs to make employee stay fit. I request all the Mastekeers/Majescians to use such opportunities.

What is required to start running?

Unlike other activities or Gym where you need to pay more, running is like a freeware tool where you can use the way you want. The only accessory which is a must is your running shoes. Nowadays there are also many people, including Milind Soman, who run bare foot. As noted earlier, the 3 success factors – Passion, Discipline & Skill – are crucial ingredients to be a successful runner

Some Funny moments to share

* One Sunday I was running in the evening as I had some work in the morning. I was running in the same route with my speed of 7kms/hours (with difficulty). I started my run when there was sunlight & was still running even after becoming dark which was noticed by a security guard in one of the complex. He was not able to believe that someone could run continuously for 3 hours, so he came towards me & asked me whether I am running from the evening without halt & when I said “Yes”, his reaction was very weird.
* Generally people walk with an umbrella on a rainy day. But runners don’t stop even if it rains as “Skin is waterproof, so don’t give excuse”. While I run alone and it is pouring, I can see many eyes looking at me as though I am someone from an alien world.

How running helped me to stay fit?

First of all it makes you feel light when you start your day by running in the fresh air. You get more energized & have more energy till late evening/ night which is very much required in P&C projects. You can try all roadside dresses which come with lesser cost as you are slim & show off. Running helps you to understand the importance of every part of the body which we otherwise ignore. One of the top priority for me or anyone is to stay healthy. Running helped me to achieve that very easily.

My experience on running 1st time Full marathon in SCMM

I had run 21kms SCMM in 2015 & then we decided to run full marathon of 42kms in Jan 2016. Satish as usual had given us a plan & we started working on that by mid May – June. We used to run 2 short runs in a week followed by a long run during weekend. 2 days in-between we used to do core exercise which was also taught by Satish. It was 3rd week of November 2015, I had practiced around 25-28 kms at a speed of 7kms/hour & the plan was to increase the kms week on week so that I am ready for SCMM in the month of January 2016. Suddenly due to project emergency, I had to go to US for a month plus. It was peak winter with cold breeze which we are not used to & I had to run in the Gym. Whenever I used to find time, I was able to run only few kms in the Gym which was not enough for me to run a Marathon. I came back to India in the month of January a week before the Marathon. That weekend I tried pushed myself to run & walk around 30Kms but I became very tired. Generally runners don’t run in the week before Marathon as they take rest and do not want to injure themselves, but I did not want to give up. I ran/walked the previous week 30kms & the subsequent week 42kms on the race day. During the whole journey of running 42kms, life taught me so many lessons in those few hours. When I had crossed 30+ kms, I thought of giving up. But then I realized there were seniors who were ahead of me & juniors who were behind me. This showed me that to be successful you need only the 3 success factors as age & gender are not the criteria. There were people who gave up after running 30+ kms also. Life is always tough but there are only few do not give up. Life is also about leadership. Even at that stage, when I was struggling to complete, I realized that there can be someone whom I can inspire as there were few young boys who were running along. When we were near the finishing post, suddenly they bowed towards me & said “Mam, Thanks for completing the race as we completed because of you”. The credit goes to my coach Satish Pillai who taught us that “Never give up if you have started the race” as when you reach the finishing line, whatever trouble you have taken to reach there will vanish & the heart will be full of happiness.

My 2 cents to all my Mastekeers & Majescians

* Never give up
* Always work with a Goal
* Work with Passion
* Work with Sincerity &Commitment
* Be disciplined

Impossible is Nothing!

All the Best & Keep Running!