Just Do It - I Did!

How many times have we all heard that wellness and a healthy lifestyle is all about setting goals and establishing good habits? Of course that's true, but I think many of us get caught up with the end result and don't place enough importance on how to get there. My own personal philosophy is that it doesn't matter what you do, when you do it, or even how fast you do it, as long as you make a commitment to do whatever it is that you can do. Like the Nike motto - Just Do It.

Last spring, after competing in the 'stair-climbing competition' (a DEQ worksite wellness event) I had worked my way up to doing all 6 floors in one session, but I was huffing and puffing like the Little Engine that Could by the time I got to the top. So, I was determined to continue some sort of aerobic activity on my own; not so much to lose weight, but to become more fit and healthy. I started walking around my neighborhood after work; a mile or two at a time, and after several weeks, I decided to try running.

Running is something I had never done in my entire life, including when I was a little girl and went outside to play, unless you count running from first to second base as a pinch runner - I used to play baseball with the boys in my neighborhood and that's all they would ever let me do. Anyway, I had *tried* running a couple of times in my adult life, but I pretty much like being able to breathe, and I couldn't seem to go more than a very short way down the street before I was gasping for air and saying to myself, "This is stupid . . . why am I doing this? I hate this." So, I'd head back home, defeated, and regroup on the couch with a can of pop and bag of chips.

But, I told myself this time was going to be different! I refused to let my own negativity keep me from getting in better shape. I started off by telling myself that I would simply do what I could do, then try again tomorrow. The first time I went running, I went a half mile before I turned around and walked home. The next day I went a half mile again. I kept at it every other day or so, and after a couple of weeks, when the negative thoughts hit (and they always did), I started reciting the multiplication tables as a distraction so I wouldn't quit. When I was in third grade, I never did learn my nine's very well so as I was moving along and thinking real hard about 9 x 7, I didn't even notice that I was still running after I hit my half mile mark.
That day I went almost three quarters of a mile before I headed home. I celebrated with pizza.

I was encouraged with my modest success, and was eager to continue, but I was still fighting those negative thoughts as I ran. It was my good fortune to have gotten an MP3 player for my birthday, so I began running to the Motown hits of the 1960's which turned out to be very good running music for my pace - not too fast, not too slow, and by concentrating on Smokey Robinson I could set aside the voice in my head that was screaming to stop this nonsense. As my progress continued, I found I was replacing negative thoughts with positive thoughts. All of a sudden, I actually started feeling good (but not until *after* I'd finish my run), so it wasn't quite so hard to make myself get out the door the next time. I told myself that I would simply do what I was able to do. I didn't compare myself to anyone else, I didn't time myself, I didn't punish myself if I had a bad run (some days are better than others), I just kept trying to go a little farther every day. Soon I ran a mile. Then I did it again the next day. I celebrated by buying new running shoes. I began to keep a journal charting my success. I was so proud of myself that I became thoroughly obnoxious to my family and friends and started acting like one of those . . . " runners". I added Aretha Franklin's song "Respect" to my MP3 player.

Now, several months later, I can run 3 miles without stopping. In fact, I went running with my husband the other day and had to double back twice so he could catch up!
I can't say yet that I love running, but ***I sure like the way I feel when I'm done.***
I may or may not try to increase my distance, but I am going to work a bit on my speed. But, you know what? Three miles seems pretty good to me. It's what I can do. My new goal is to make it a habit. And drink more water. . . except, I hate water.