“Start spreading the news . . .” echoed through the windy morning air as a wave of runners began a collection of individual journeys through the five boroughs of the Big Apple. The 2013 ING New York City Marathon was the largest marathon in the world, with over 50,000 runners participating, and I was one of them. The streets of Brooklyn and Queens were packed with lively and encouraging spectators. The ethnic diversity was breathtaking. It was like seeing the world in 10 miles along 4th Avenue. People were high-fiv
and showering me with adoration.

and praise. At mile 16, at the base of the Queensboro Bridge going into Manhattan, I took an extended walk break to check in with my wife. Moments later, my pace group zoomed by. After a couple of minutes of trying to catch up, the pace group kept pulling away. My mind was telling me to go faster, but my body was not responding. ‘This is not good.’ The last 9 miles were painful and frustrating. Finally, with calves cramping with every step, I crossed the finish line of the New York City Marathon.

Completing a marathon has taught me many lessons about life. I’ve learned the value of planning, discipline and preparation. I’ve come to realize that 26.2 miles is a LONG way. But my biggest takeaway is this: success in the marathon, and life, also requires balance and celebration.

Balance is not a destination to be reached, but a continual life-long journey. In the race, imbalances are met with panic and overcorrection. A perceived setback in the first mile can lead to a panicked second mile. I’ve learned the best approach is to take measured steps in the right direction.

Think about your own journeys for a moment, especially any recent New Year’s resolutions. Have you allowed your physical health to take a backseat to your career or financial goals? Or are your finances out of shape and need serious attention? My advice - do not try to make up years of neglect in the first quarter! Take small steps toward sustainable disciplines and activities and go from there. Stay focused, stay committed, and celebrate each step towards your accomplishment. I’ve found the last part – celebrating – to be so impactful for me. Celebrate more this year! It will give you a motivation boost to meet your goals year after year.