

The Human Race Reaching our Potential

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Post Race Report



Connectwell 31st August 2008, Wembley Stadium, London.

'The Human Race' – Connectwell Team Post Race Review

Q. What do you get when you combine the winding turns of Cornish lanes with some new trainers and a dedicated coach giving sound advice? Team Connectwell's Human Race.

You'll be glad to know the running team of Steve, Kim & Isabel had a fantastic race on Sunday 31st August. They completed the 10K circuit in a respectable 67 minutes! Admirable when you consider the pouring rain and conditions on the night.

Our Story

Picture the scene - 20K people packed into a fresh, cool Wembley Stadium waiting for the pre race concert to start. There was anticipation in the air. The warm up act certainly deserved their fee as people seemed more concerned with the race ahead of them and the darkening skies. We started to ponder how well prepared we actually were now it was 'show time'. How different we all were in that respect. Isabel had recently come back from a family holiday in Cornwall. There, to condition herself, she made friends with the hilly lanes of Cornwall, her regular training companion for several weeks. Steve had been away too. This time it was Mauritius on his annual trip to see his Dad. Again, using the natural terrain he braved the mountain slopes behind his Father's house every other day to get fit. Kim on the other hand kept fit whilst on holiday in the Algarve, Portugal. Then back home she took a more structured approach using the parks of Greenwich and a fixed routine. In spite of such different approaches to our training we all had a common goal in mind - To race together for 3 worthy causes and connect with 1 Million People worldwide.

So back to Wembley. The runners were off! Wave 1, then Wave 2 took to the streets



streaming out of the stadium like a sea of red through the gates. We watched on the big screen as the other participating cities took to the streets across the planet. So down we went ready for Wave 3 – our wave. Having stripped off down to compulsory red Nike T-Shirt the heavens opened again! At that point the stadium resembled a giant sink with someone running the tap! How quick things change – suddenly the outer clothing that had

been discarded (to be collected for charity) became the new currency. We managed to retrieve our old T-shirts and caps to keep up the pretence of being dry.

..and then we were off! The feeling of all that muscle power at the start was awesome. What different races we ran. Isabel was nervous; for her, the first 1K was the hardest with a stitch confirming her worst fears. I, on the other hand was taking care of the basics, which meant keeping my head up, not running into the back of anyone and sticking with the team. Kim simply jumped into the race and hung on. It was actually a lonely race at times. *So how can you be lonely with 20K other runners and spectators?* Well, the weather was shocking so many spectators' stayed home - the route was not suited for pedestrians anyway. Instead, we hoped for a glimpse of our support team – our friends and family who turned out for us. It was enough to know they were out there looking for us too.

So we battled on. The atmosphere was strange inside the race – kind of quiet. We got into our stride but something was still missing. We got wind of a couple of 'likely lads' just behind us trying to get a *sing song* going. Without any encouragement we got straight in there – the result: the worst rendition of 'Bohemian Rhapsody' you ever heard. Still – it shifted the whole atmosphere for all those around us. Suddenly there were smiling faces and some humour in the face of adversity.

Just past the halfway mark the unexpected happened – Paula Radcliffe, just back from a disappointing Beijing came flying past with a polite "excuse me guys." Naturally, we gave chase led by Kim with her Connectwell sticker in hand. After a few heartfelt words from Steve to Paula about the impact she'd made on us she said thank you and sped on her way up the field. Amazing! This was in stark contrast to some of the other runners in the race who were, shall we say, not backwards in coming forward and barging to get ahead. None of that behaviour for Paula!



So as the end approached we were encouraged by the 8K and 9K markers coming up. We'd only had a fleeting glimpse of our support team just the once. By this time Kim had developed a nasty blister and was suffering. Soldiering on, encouraged by the warm glow of the Wembley Stadium Arch, we finished together with a flurry of speed at the end right up to the line. We did it! The excitement and exhilaration we all felt at the finish line was

palpable. One of the best moments was the post race hug and our "cheers" celebration with three bottles of mineral water -better than the finest champagne!



Isabel, Kim & Steve – Pre Race

Our Learning

We learned so much about ourselves on our respective journeys to that single moment. Kim had never considered herself a ‘runner’ up until then. Now she knows, with hard work and support, she can run with the best of them. Isabel was so proud that her sons came and watched their Mum run – what a role model. Steve is proud of running together as a team and the shared experience that we underwent. We set out our goals and achieved them with determination, motivation and support from our friends, families and the rest of the Connectwell Team.

Lessons on potential that we’d like to share:

Humility – You can reach out and explore your potential and still do it with grace and humility. Potential and achievement don’t have to be loud and flashy.

(Paula Radcliffe. Coming from a difficult period in her career and choosing to run with Wave 4 from the back. A shining example of a fine athlete who has reached out and explored her potential but still retains the humility to run with such grace and manners. A quiet motivator! or is that quite a motivator?)

Diversity – Diversity is OK. You can embrace different approaches and methods and still achieve great things as long as there is respect and a common purpose.

(We had such different preparation for the event but all with a common purpose. Having to find our own personal route to the finish, both what we had to overcome and what resources we called upon).

Spirit & Connection – Creating the right spirit and energy in any situation can have a massive impact. The right connection amongst people is powerful.

(The spirit during the race was vital. How a couple of lone voices were able to start a ‘movement’ that changed the feel of the race that carried many people further than they ever expected. This was achieved against a backdrop of pouring rain, the dark night and lack of spectators).

Context & the changing value of things – When the context shifts it is important to notice that and decide how it might impact your goals and activities. Ignorance is not always bliss. Look at the perspective you hold – is it the right one?

(Suddenly a pile of unwanted T-shirts and caps became the new currency when the rain came down before the race. The context of what you are doing and what is happening around you is so important and it can shift just when you least expect it).

Support – A little support can go a long way. Being encouraged and championed by one or just a few is very powerful. Receiving support can make you wonder who you champion in the world!

(How much it really means to know you are being encouraged or championed. Whether it is as specific as being coached by an elite athlete or simply knowing there is a friendly face out there in the dark looking for you).

The ‘Inch beyond the tape’ – Reach for the stars! You never truly imagine you could achieve so much. Sometimes having the courage and imagination to dream just that little bit higher is the right thing to do.

(How much Team Connectwell achieved. Isabel had never run that far – ever. Kim didn’t think she could run at all. The team hung together and actually got faster as the race went on! What would we have done if we’d set our ambition that little bit higher? Knowing that there is always more that can be achieved with the right motivation).

Discover more about your potential and the connections you can make by talking to the team.

Steve & the team

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