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The Night Before My Amputation

On Sunday, Acton marks the 30th anniversary of the Terry Fox Run at the Acton High School track. Participants will continue the Marathon of Hope that Fox was forced to abandon when his cancer returned. In a heartfelt letter he reveals his emotions as he prepared for surgery.

The night before my amputation, my former basketball coach brought me a magazine with an article on an amputee who ran in the New York Marathon. It was then I decided to meet this new challenge head on and not only overcome my disability, but conquer it in such a way that I could never look back and say it disabled me.

But I soon realized that that would only be half my quest, for as I went through the 16 months of physically and emotionally draining ordeal of chemotherapy, I was rudely awakened by the feelings that surrounded and coursed through the cancer clinic.

There were faces with the brave smiles and the ones who had given up smiling. There were feelings of hopeful denial and the feelings of despair. My quest would not be a selfish one. I could not leave knowing these faces and feelings would still exist, even though I would be set free from mine. Somewhere the hurting must stop and I was determined to take myself to the limit for this cause.

From the beginning the going was extremely difficult, and I was facing chronic ailments foreign to runners with two legs in addition to the

common physical strains felt by all dedicated athletes. But these problems are now behind me, as I have either out persisted or learned to deal with them. I feel strong not only physically, but more important, emotionally.

Soon I will be adding one full mile a week, and coupled with the weight training I have been doing, by next April I will be ready to achieve something that for me was once only a distant dream reserved for the world of miracles; to run across Canada to raise money for the fight against cancer.

The running I can do, even if I have to crawl every last mile. We need your help. The people in cancer clinics all over the world need people who believe in miracles.

I am not a dreamer, and I am not saying that this will initiate any kind of definitive answer or cure cancer. But I believe in miracles. I have to.

*Terry Fox,
October 1979*



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