



## Finishing Last

"It's all about finishing last," my publisher said to me the other day. To my American ears, these seemed like strange words indeed. I tried to wrap my brain around the word "last", but my mind kept revolting; no, this can't be, everyone knows it's all about finishing first. My publisher continued, "In the world of publishing it's not about getting your book out first, it's about your book being the last one on the shelves, after other books have come and gone, your book continues to be well-loved and stocked routinely in bookstores everywhere."

Finishing last. I wonder where else this concept might support our lives. A friend recently told me that she sat across from the founder of a famous body lotion company that had grown rapidly, demanding lots of entrepreneurial time and attention. My friend asked this successful woman how she was able to accomplish so much with 2 small children at home. The woman replied, "I pace myself." My brain took another pause.

In the teachings of Ayurveda, an Eastern science that deals with health and longevity, there is a prevailing concept about well-being. Ayurveda teaches that in all our activities, we are never to exert more than one half of our full capacity in any given moment. In case a crisis or challenge arises, we will have some extra energy available to meet it, and we will never find ourselves depleted. As I look around at most of us, it looks more to me like we are running at the top of our game, using ourselves up until there is nothing left.

A few years ago I was at a workshop in Esalen. While there, I met a very interesting man from Toyko. He and his buddy, both gifted and dedicated entrepreneurs, had been on the fast track when suddenly his buddy, at a young age, dropped dead of a massive heart attack. Looking at his dead friend, this man saw his own life instantly flash before him and made the choice to sell his business. He then began to run marathons all over the world. When I met him, he had been running for 5 years and never sustained even the slightest injury.

There was something appealing about this man from Toyko. I could tell others were also drawn to him. He was gentle and contented, and his smile looked like it held a secret. When I asked him about his running, he told me that the worst race he ever ran was when he came in close to first. His best runs, he continued, were the ones he had come in closer to last because he had the opportunity to enjoy the run and appreciate the scenery.

Finishing last. I wonder what it would be like to be the ones who remain steady and calm with enough reserve to meet anything at the end of our lives, or even the end of each day. The ones who finish last by staying well-loved and seasoned with integrity because we have paced ourselves for the long haul and enjoyed the scenery along the way. Maybe there are some parts of our lives where finishing last wouldn't be such a bad place to be.

Deborah Adele is an engaging, lively, and thought-provoking speaker who is not afraid to share stories from her own years of living and learning. She facilitates thoughtful and tangible ways of showing up to life in new ways, leaving participants with a dynamic combination of hope, inspiration, and practical knowledge. She is the author of *The Yamas & Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice*, 2 CD's: *The Art of Relaxation* and *The Practice of Meditation* and authored a regular wellness column for the Duluth News Tribune.