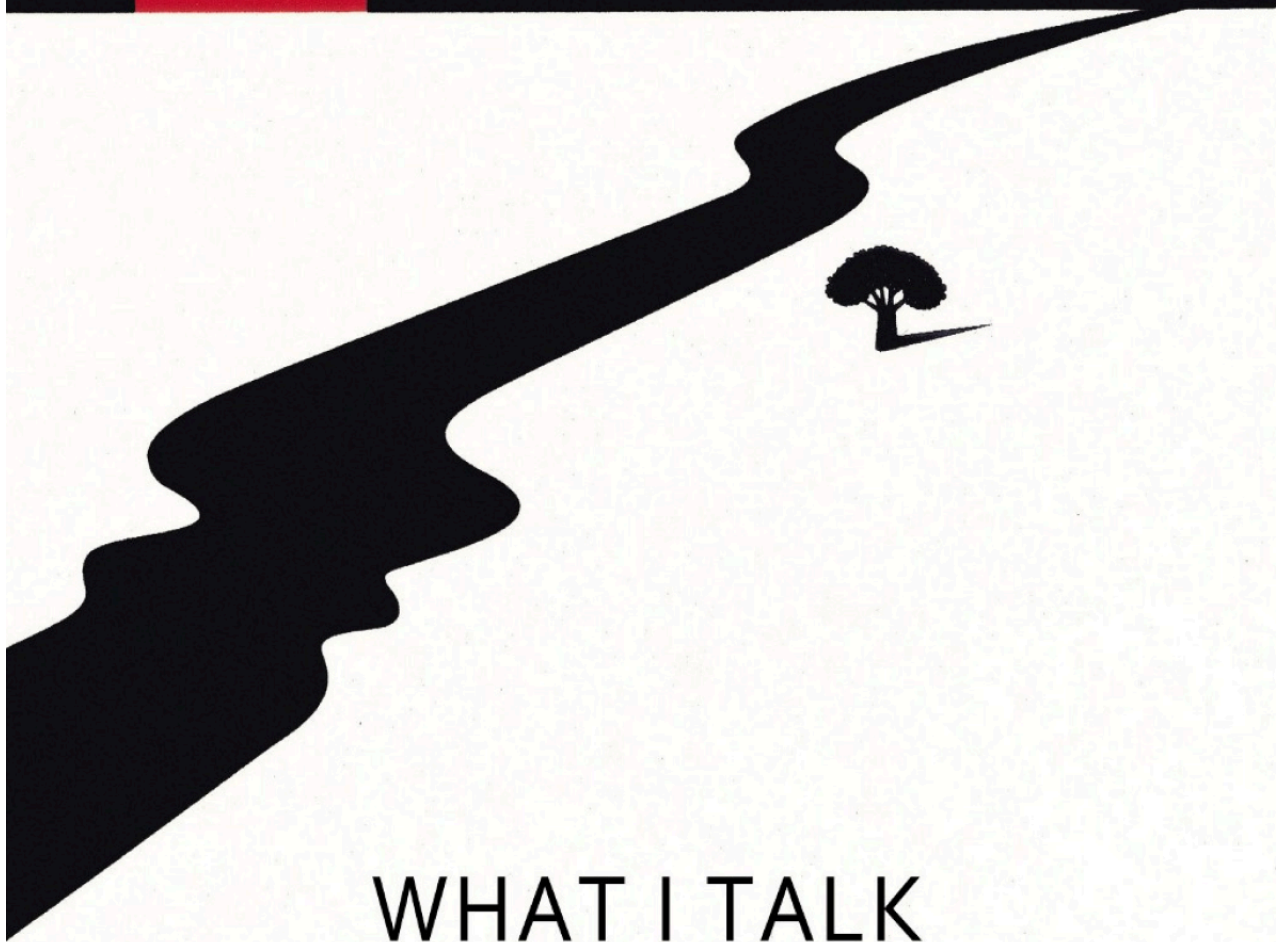


# PERDRIX



WHAT I TALK  
ABOUT WHEN I TALK  
ABOUT RUNNING

VINTAGE

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# **What I Talk About When I Talk About Running**

**A reflection on running, while running.**

Original audio-book at [bit.ly/runningui](http://bit.ly/runningui).

*To Estrela,  
and all those who bring the runner out inside of me.*

## **What I Talk About When I Talk About Running**

I never truly reflected on running. A part of while running, of course. Because when you run, your mind wanders. It's one of these moments where you can't control it, either. I mean, not like if you could actually ever control it. Your mind wanders around from one place to another either way, and then you get lost in it, and sometimes back out.

Running is no different. Running just amplifies the process because you have time. And when you have time, thoughts start streaming in.

I don't remember how I started running. I don't even remember when I started running. I'm trying really hard to remember. I was 14 and I was in Peru. And I was training for something like a 2000 meter run in Arequipa, a city located at also 2000 meters altitude. At that time, I was proud of myself that I could run at a high altitude. What I didn't know was that 2000 meters, in distance or altitude, is nothing in the world of running.

I seriously started running when I became sincere with myself. Running became a way for me to express what was inside and what had to go out. As a student, when I was around nine-teens years old, I started going on runs on Sundays. They started with five kilometers, moved over to ten, fifteen

and twenty. Running became my way of releasing things. Running became my way of finding some peace - at least for the few moments after the run - and to calm my mind down. Or at least, have the time to process what's inside of it.

But running truly isn't about running. To me, running is just a side consequence of another intention. Running is the ability to lose oneself, the ability to discover, and the ability to rediscover oneself.

Let's start with the losing yourself part. I love discovering cities while running. Well, at least, I used to, since I haven't done it in the last years. The last memorable time was in Manila, ten years ago, when I decided to get lost in the middle of the city with no phone. And after ten kilometers, meaning after around one hour of running, I decided to go back and try to find my way back home. And I did.

I was a kid at that time. I didn't care about the dangers, about the risks. Although, to be frank, I still don't. At least not as much as most people. Would I still do it and lose myself in a city? Actually, I could. What's holding me back from that? Maybe the fact that now, wherever I go, I have 4G for free, including in the middle of Brazil.

Side-note to the reader: I actually do care about risks and dangers. It's just that I am more realistic about them than most people. Like, what is the danger of getting assaulted in Manila when you

don't have a phone on yourself? Very low. And what is the risk of getting assaulted while running? Low as well. Hence, there truly wasn't anything to fear - worst case, I would walk to a police station or get help on the street by a stranger for directions, like I actually did, or ask someone for tap water. And that is a fine worst-case-scenario to me.

Let's go back to the subject of running for discoveries. Or, running to get lost, I mean. Because both are ultimately linked: when you get lost, you'll discover something and when you discover something, you get lost in it.

Running, to me, is kind of like sitting on a bus and seeing the *paysage* unfold. It is that moment in which a series of moments collage together into the picture that hasn't been created before, and you get lots in trance, until your mind comes back and fights it - but that's for another chapter.

When I talk about running, I talk about freedom. The freedom of my body. Remembering that my body is actually still fit. Remembering that while, as Eastern philosophies claim, we are beyond our bodies, we still have to take care of them. And so running reminds me of the fact that I am still free. And reminds me, that I, too, need to cultivate this home and nurture it.

Running *is* freedom. It's the freedom of going wherever the fuck you want. You don't need anything. You don't need authorizations, you don't need a car, you don't need fuel. You don't even

really need water. You can run for hours without water, even though your mouth becomes really dry after a while. But that can be a choice, too.

When I talk about running, I actually talk about *inner* freedom. Yes, there is the outer freedom of being able to move freely into the forest or city and getting lost and discovering places around you. But running truly is about the capacity to decide to go on a run. It's about the capacity to be present with yourself. It's about the capacity to overcome yourself and to realize that over and over again, each step is different. And that the step that you're taking right now is making a difference.

I'm the most creative when I'm running. Sometimes I judge myself because I take an entire afternoon to go for a nice run in the park instead of responding to my colleagues or clients or creating deep work. But here's a trick: they're all interlinked. Whenever I run, I release all of the tensions I have inside. My body unlocks and so does my mind. Actually, running is where I have some of the most creative flow states - such as being able to dictate a freaking book (and this while listening to funky music)!

It's an antidote - well, let's call it rather a dote, or even a connector dots - to real life. It's after running that I want to make the world again. It's after running that I want to make love. It's after running that I feel invincible. It's after running that I feel alive. It's after

running, and during running, that I feel all these things and more simultaneously.

I never got addicted to running, like some people do. For example, my sister did. She got addicted to sports. Which I believe is a better addiction to have than drugs like I used to. So kudos to her. I guess, maybe, a part of me is still replacing one habit with another. One way of coping emotions and getting my needs for diversity, variety and stability met at the same time. Like Tony Robbins said: when you get all of your four fundamental needs fulfilled - which are variety and stability, love and significance - by the one and same thing, you get addicted. The good types of drugs are the ones that actually also make you grow personally and contribute to the world. But most types of drugs do *not* help you evolve as a human or as a society. They make you stuck. But running doesn't make me stuck, though. It does help me grow and evolve. And maybe that is the only reason why addictions to sports can't be a bad one, as long as it doesn't ruin you physically.

If I were to start a book about running, I would sit down and reflect about all of the moments I've run. About all of the significant and life-changing moments. I would also think about all the techniques and things that I've changed in my running style and that have changed me. For example, not running with shoes anymore, but with *shocks* - what I call shoe-socks with super super

thin soles that you can't even feel. They make you super connected to the ground when running. And because your feet move naturally, instead of running on your heel and having your knee absorb the impact, you run on the front of your foot, whereby it's your calf muscles that absorb it. And by doing this, you avoid all of the knee injuries that most runners have.

But that's not how I started this book. I did not sit down, or even reflect, on moments, techniques, or breakthroughs I had while running. I started this book the same way I start every run, which is choosing *one* direction and then *completely* letting go. I chose the direction of delivering some value, of explaining my relationship towards running - and then I let it evolve. The opposite would have been to map down the 10 point book structure and the 15 point plan to reach it, which - while this too is a fine approach - is not my approach on life.

Running really is a metaphor for life. And life, I guess, is a metaphor for running.

Well, running is no different than life. There are days in which you want to run, and there are days in which you don't. I've run marathons without preparation. And I've prepared for marathons without running them. There's no such thing as black or white. It's a whole scale. There are days in which you can choose the scale, and there are others in which the scale chooses you.



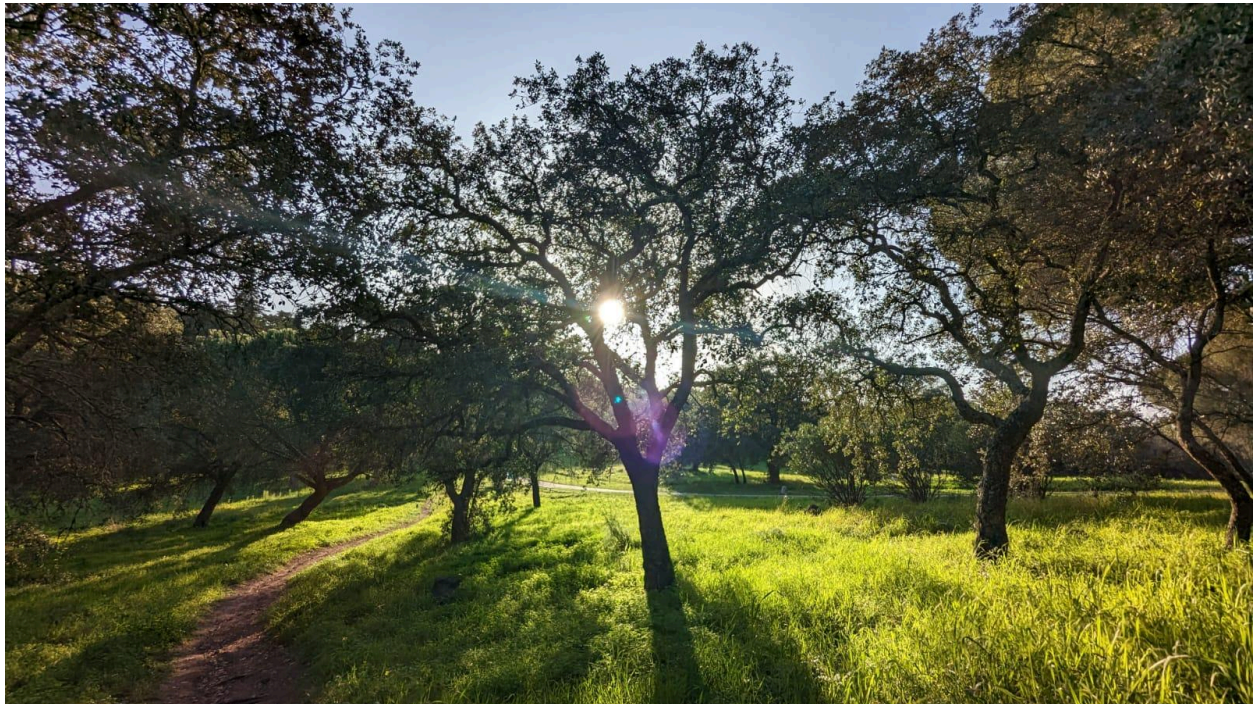
I feel complete for this first edition of this book, which personally I feel is only going to be one chapter of a long book that one day needs to be written, but not now. My relationship to running is still evolving. It's irregular and always has been. But it comes up in different shapes. At this point, it's still

formless. I'm looking forward to seeing which form it evolves into.

*Be running, my friend.*

Gui Perdrix

February 2023



*This book has been dictated out loud while running, among others, through this field.*

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