

Why The Internet Needs More Running Selfies

It is my great honor this week to post an article by Liz of [Gross Gets Fit](#).

Six months ago, I decided that I wanted to become more active. After years of waking up late on Saturday mornings only to scroll through Facebook and see friends running races, I succumbed to peer pressure. I started a 5K training program. And, just like the friends that had unknowingly convinced me to start running, I posted about it on Facebook.



Image from www.grossgetsfit.com

The [app](#) I was using to train had a built-in sharing function that would post how long I exercised, how much of that time was running, and what my longest interval was. I used this function to share every single run from that training program. I wasn't doing it for attention, but for accountability and encouragement. I read every comment and looked at the name of every person that clicked "like." I also secretly hoped that if I didn't share a run for a few days, people would ask me what was going on and get me back on track. I received a lot of advice, and tons of encouragement during this time. Five weeks into training, after finishing a Saturday morning run that made me feel pretty amazing, I posted my first running

selfie.

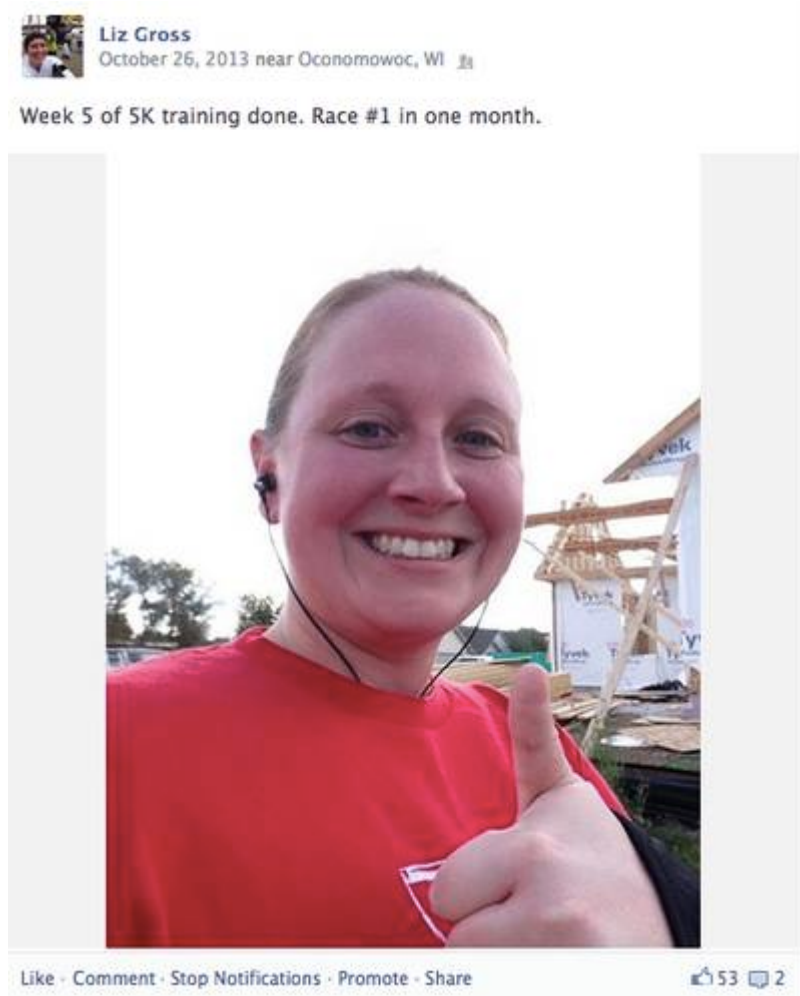


Image from www.grossgetsfit.com

I stuck with status updates until my first 5K race. Of course, I needed a finish line photo...but mom had to take it because I was too tired to take a selfie.



Image from www.grossgetsfit.com

And then the deluge began. I found the photo function on Nike Plus, and my post-run sharing routine now included a photo. It became a way for me to show that I was enjoying this (or

feeling tortured, depending on the day). I wanted to visualize my improvement as my distance progressed. I liked seeing these photos of myself after being active. I could see that I felt a sense of accomplishment, and some part of me probably knew I needed to remember that feeling on days I was feeling completely lazy.

A friend suggested that I make a collage of all the selfies some day, and I think I will. But even here, I can quickly see a progression from a 2-mile run to a 5 mile run.



Image from www.grossgetsfit.com

People comment and click like, and it makes me feel good. It also makes me feel like I have something to prove, not just to myself, but everyone on whom I've unleashed the endless stream of selfies.

Turns Out The Selfies Aren't For Myself

A few months ago, things came full circle. Remember, I started running because my friends ([Ed](#), [Tim](#), and [Lisa](#), among

others) were posting photos and updates from their runs and races. Then [Karine](#) told me that she got back into running because I inspired her. I. Inspired. Her.

Yesterday I visited the farmers that I like to buy eggs from, and they said they enjoy watching my progress and Facebook and they're cheering me on. They even asked if I ran to their house (running back home with eggs was not something I had planned on doing, but it would be an interesting challenge). My mom feels like she's been watching me run, even though she hasn't seen me in person in months.

It turns out the selfies aren't all about me.

Displaying Your Victories & Struggles Inspires Others to Try

Today, [Katie](#) (another runner that has motivated me) posted this on Instagram:

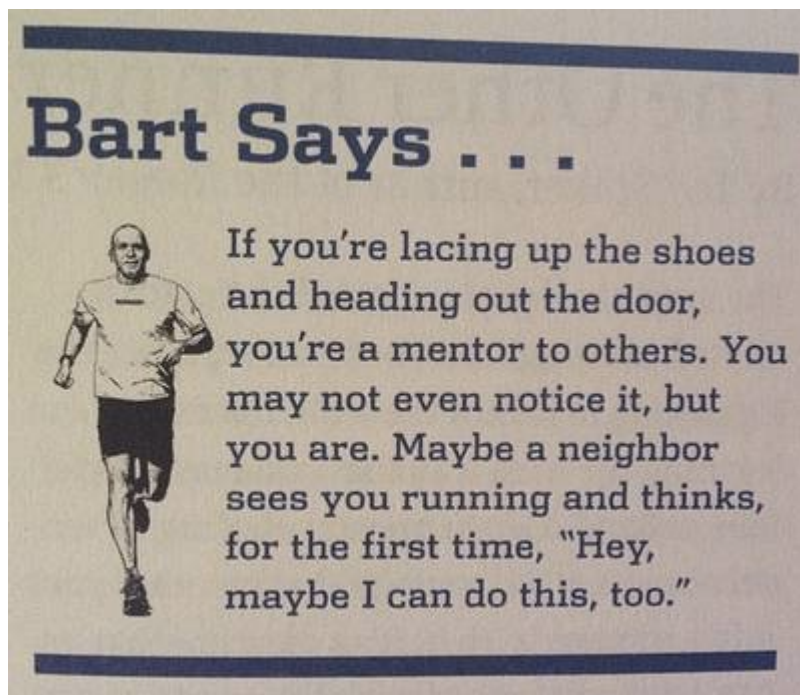


Image from www.grossgetsfit.com

It's totally true. I know so because others had that effect on me. But the people that made me think I could run—the girl who

didn't run a mile until after her 31st birthday—weren't on my block. They were in my newsfeed. And I never want to see them leave, because they push me to try harder. I didn't hesitate to set a half marathon goal because I knew so many other people that had done it. I'm proud to be one of those people. So yes, you'll see a running selfie two or three times a week if we're Facebook friends. Because I'm damn proud of the fact that I can run for over an hour. That I've lost 45 pounds. That I'm working every day to be a little bit healthier than I was the day before (some days more successful than others). If you're on this journey too—particularly if you're older, or overweight, or disabled, or have another good excuse for people to think you can't get fit—put it all out there. (Well, not all of it. Please keep your clothes on). Show the world what real people look like when they're getting healthy. Chances are, you'll be leading a crowd you didn't know was following you.

About Liz:

Liz is 32 year old blogger at [Gross Gets Fit](#), who is on a journey towards living a healthy lifestyle. She currently lives in Oconomowoc, WI with her husband. Her current goals include 40 more pounds to get to goal and beginning a strength training schedule. You can follow her blog [here](#).