

# THE NEXT CHAPTER



Hello!

I've just completed a 50 km walk! I'm pretty chuffed to say the least. Was it in a record breaking time? No. Did I win my category? Actually I'm not sure where I came but I think it was near the back.

What I did realise though is that there are a lot of similarities between an ultratrail event and thinking about our next chapter ( whether that's retirement or something else).

1. Variety of people -there were so many people there of different ages, abilities, goals, ambitions, time to train and plans for the future. One guy had run a number of 100km events but on this day he was walking the 50 km. There was another guy there who used to be a runner but was working as a volunteer at the aid stations. He made things super easy when filling up our water bladders as he knew what it was like on the other side and wanting to keep going with minimal stops. Much like life we have such a different array of skills, desires and goals that what we do next will look different for everyone. Sometimes it's good to take a step back and reflect on what that looks like for you.

2. The Gear - there were people there with all the fancy technical gear, quivers for poles, fancy belts to hold bottles and poles, slick backpacks and the shoes! My goodness the array of shoes was phenomenal but there were also people there in basic trainers, shorts and a t-shirt who were having just as much fun. It's not always about the money and if you don't have a lot there are still ways to enjoy yourself.

3. Comradery - when you're feeling nervous or a sense of anticipation it helps to have others around you who are going through the same thing. When you're halfway up a hill and there's another 2 km to go it really makes a difference if someone else goes - jeepers this is hard and you slog it out together on the way up and chat all the way down because now you can breathe. Connection is vital to our human condition so make sure to maintain the ones you have and seek new ones who are heading in a similar direction to you.

4. Support networks - no one who competes in these types of events does it without some support whether it's someone picking up the slack on child care or doing extra chores or driving you to the start line and providing you with hot soup and a warm jacket afterwards. We can't do life completely alone so its really important to find your network that will support you wherever you are at in life.

5. Setting goals - I may have found it slightly more challenging to ensure I walked regularly, particularly the 5 hour ones both days of the weekend, if I hadn't set a goal. It doesn't matter what your goal is but having a sense of purpose and a reason to move forward is one of the things that ensures we maintain a positive mental state. Make a goal to explore what your next chapter could look like.

If you're keen to look at what's next for you I'd love to hear from you at [elizabeth@thenextchapter.nz](mailto:elizabeth@thenextchapter.nz) (mailto:elizabeth@thenextchapter.nz) . Long runs/walks are optional!

All the best  
Elizabeth

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