

Do Your Book One Hill at a Time

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When faced with the goal of writing a book, or any sizeable writing project for that matter, the task ahead looks daunting. Discouraging. Even to experienced writers! Hardly a surprise. We're talking about chapter after chapter after chapter... thousands upon thousands of words. Holy cannoli... I don't care who you are, it's exhausting just to think about!

Maybe the following true story may help.

I remembered it just yesterday, in an email exchange with an old, childhood friend who currently has some major difficulties ahead of him. I'm hoping the tale helped him as maybe it will you.

Although I've been in this part of the world for going on 25 years now, I wasn't born or raised here. I'm a Manila boy, from the Philippines; college brought me here, and although returning after school was the original "plan," things just change I guess.

Now my father was a successful, very determined man. He had a nose for business; he was very much a natural at it. His strong-headed determination helped in that arena, of course, but nowhere else did it come out front and center than in sports. You see, we weren't "blessed" athletically. Oh, we did OK, but nothing special. But you wouldn't have thought that looking at those sporting event trophies he'd collected in his study: basketball, tennis, squash, golf... you name it, he probably had a trophy.

In 1980, the sport du jour was cycling.

But this isn't a story about him. It's about 13-year-old me. Being the oldest and a son to boot, I had to go do a lot of these weekend athlete things with him. And no, it didn't really help that I was a bit on the chubby side. This time around, the goal was a long bike ride to Tagaytay City and back.

Tagaytay's probably about 25 miles from where we lived in the Metro Manila area. Maybe not a biggie by today's standards, until you realize that much of the getting there part was going *uphill*... Tagaytay's about 2,500 feet above sea level Manila.

That dad would get there and fast was a foregone conclusion. In fact, after a few miles, he was nothing more than a dot on the horizon ahead of me before disappearing from view completely. I was the big question mark.

The route we took was what-was-then-considered-full of cyclists – most pro-looking, with sinewy legs and well-worn black skin tight shorts, casually pedaling along, out for

nothing more than a simple Sunday workout to Tagaytay and back. I stuck out like a gangrenous wound. Which I now realize was a good thing: One of the strong, regular riders seemed to take a liking to me, and decided to ride next to me and keep me company as I huffed and puffed along.

Around mile 20, I was about to hit “the wall.” After who knows how many hills, my legs had had enough, and my resolve was crumbling. And there I was, facing yet another godawful who knows how long or how steep hill in front of my now wobbling bicycle. My new “friend” could sense I was about to call it quits. He slowed down, turned to me, and said, “This is the last hill. Tagaytay’s right there at the top.”

Hell if I was going to give up now. So I pushed to the top... and saw another hill. “Sorry,” he said, “my mistake. It’s at the top of that next one.” So off I pushed, knowing full well I could take “just one more hill.”

We did that routine hill after hill after hill.

That, my friends, is how 13-year-old chubby little me made it all the way up to Tagaytay on my 10-speed.

Your book is just one chapter at a time away. You know full well you can do “just one more chapter.” Go do it.

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