

Is once begun really half done?

As a child, I loved Aesop's fable about the tortoise and the hare. Being athletically challenged, I could rarely identify with the hare but delighted in the knowledge of the slow and steady turtle winning the event. Although Aesop did not include it in the text, some illustrators depict a crowd of onlookers cheering the tortoise on as he painstakingly took each step. Though the moral encourages us to get into the race and persevere to the end, it begs the question is once begun really half done? (It certainly did not work out that way for the hare.)

Many may attribute the turtle's success to his commitment, focus and determination alone. I think the affirmation of the crowd also played a major role to spur him on when he became discouraged by his opponent's quick start, when his racing form was lacking or harmful or when weariness may have precipitated thoughts to quit.

The tortoise and the hare appear to be participating in a one-time event. Yet throughout our lives, we humans are called upon to make minor adjustments as well as drastic changes as circumstances and relationships fluctuate. Studies show that such changes don't occur over night. It takes time to develop new habits and create new patterns in the brain.

As one traveling the road of reinvention, I am greatly encouraged when others share their experience and insights with me. I appreciate their challenges and support. Having a mentor, accountability partner or good friend moves you forward more quickly than if you were going it alone. I find that spending time in the Bible and prayer provides continuous inspiration from my Creator and empowers me to go in the right direction. In addition, I seek out people who will ask me the hard questions about my progress and encourage me to get up again when I struggle or fall.

If you don't yet have someone like that who can encourage you as you begin your newest challenge, count me in as your head cheerleader, and go for it!