

Peak experience and
performance: the
positive energy of a
"runner's high" essay
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Peak Experience and Performance: The Positive Energy of a “Runner’s High” Essay Sample

Abraham Maslow has done extensive research on the constructive and calming phenomenon known as the “peak experience”. These mind/body experiences are a hallmark of what Maslow refers to as transcending self-actualization and a person, who experiences many of these peak experiences, is said to be a transcending self-actualizer. According to Maslow, these types of people are the most aesthetically pleased and at the top of his theoretical hierarchy of needs. This must mean then that I am a transcending self-actualizer, because I have many peak experiences when I run. The “runners high” I feel when I have pushed myself to my physical limits helps me to transcend to a mental sense of well-being that can only be explained by Maslow’s theory. Science, also explains the health benefits of my “runners high” and I promote to everyone, the positive effects of running, it makes me feel wonderful!

After I have run for some time and passed what I consider my threshold of what my muscles can handle, I feel like I am in a zone where everything around me and within me is clearer and simpler. I am proud of what I have accomplished and I feel a sense of pride and peace with who I am.

Sometimes I run alone, but since I am such an advocate of this positive activity, I encourage friends to join me. When I run with others, it seems like we have a bonding experience that I do not have at other moments in life. This is exactly as Maslow explains the phenomenon of the peak experience.

We are more whole, more integrated, more aware of ourselves and of the world during peak moments. At such times we think, act, and feel most clearly and accurately. We are more loving and accepting of others, have less inner conflict and anxiety, and are better able to put our energies to constructive use. Some people enjoy more peak experiences than others, particularly those Maslow called transcending self-actualizers (Frager& Fadiman, 2005).

My positive emotional and mental state from running does not last for a great deal of time. The “runner’s high” is something that appears when I am almost done with my run (about 3.5 miles into a 5 mile jaunt) and carries me throughout the rest of the trip. When I stop, I still feel clearer and more in touch with my self. But, the peak moment is brief, where I feel totally on top of the world and with one with the rest of my natural surroundings. The tiredness kicks in and I go back to my normal state of being. But, I can say that I do have these peak experiences each time I run. I believe that a part of this phenomenon as well is that I know that my life will last longer, because I am taking better care of my body. Knowing this and that life is precious is a part of the well-being I feel. Research has, also shown that I am extending my life as part of my running. “Endorphins and other morphine-like substances known as opioids, which are released during exercise, don’t just make you feel good — they may also protect you from heart attacks, according to University of Iowa researchers” (University of Iowa, 2007).

In closing, I regularly experience what Abraham Maslow coined as a peak experience. I feel that through my running, I am healthier, happier, and <https://assignbuster.com/peak-experience-and-performance-the-positive-energy-of-a-runners-high-essay-sample/>

inexplicably at a peaceful place in my mind that I have never experienced through other venues. When I jog with others, I feel a different sort of bond than from other interactions and I believe we are all at our own time and in our own way feeling those peak experiences, sometimes referred to as a “runner’s high”. This form of activity has led me to the highest sort of self-actualization and I am very proud of that.

References:

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University of Iowa (2007, November 9). ‘ Runner’s High’ May Also Strengthen Hearts. *ScienceDaily* . Retrieved November 12, 2007, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/11/071108115611.htm>.