

Steve in IL

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Subject : **Looking for some  
Ironman inspiration? Read  
on...**

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I posted this last year, a few days after my first Ironman at Ironman Wisconsin. But, since there are so many new "faces" around, I thought I'd post it again.

The day after the race, I received this email from my sister, Deb. She was there to watch the race, and through this letter she managed to capture the spirit of Ironman through words as well as anyone could. When people ask why I would do such a thing like the Ironman, all I need to do is show them this. I just read it again, and now I can't wait for the cannon to go off this year, to once again get the priveledge of being an Ironman.

"Hi Steve -

Well, I made it home safe and sound. Had to pull over for one 30-minute snooze, but other than that the trip went well. Small price to pay for witnessing a midnight Ironman finish line the night before!

I'm still trying to bask in all the excitement I was privileged to see on Sunday. I spent the first 2 hours of my drive just reliving everything I saw in my mind, (the middle 3 hours listening to my book-on-tape since it is due back to the library tomorrow!), then the last 2 hours thinking about what I could do after witnessing an Ironman. You all may not realize what impact you have on spectators so I'll just tell you a little of mine.

I saw real people living out dreams based on goals they'd set for themselves long before September 15th. I saw determination and "giving it all" like I'd never seen before. I saw people doing this not as much to compete with others, but to simply accomplish something they'd never dreamed they could do before training began. I saw an athlete grab his elderly mom and run her down the finish line with him, arm in arm, both with smiles a mile wide. I saw grandparents waiting in silent anticipation for their grandson just to see him and cheer him on for a second or two as he ran by. I saw kids with "My Daddy's an Ironman" on their shirts. I saw a wife crying as her husband crossed the finish line. I saw marriage proposals and pregnancy announcements. I saw athletes running in silence, very focused on what appeared to be just them, the road and God, telling themselves "one mile at a time, one mile at a time....". I saw the announcers going to great lengths to mention every athlete's name as he/she passed by, getting the crowd going

to keep the athlete going. I saw a rough, macho-looking male spectator reduced to tears as he hugged his friend after he crossed the finish line. I saw a 2-month-old cross the line in his Daddy's arms. I saw a 73-year-old man cross the finish line. I saw and heard just as much excitement for the guy crossing the finish line at 11:58 p.m. as the first guy to cross that same line many hours before. That spoke volumes to me. This was a spirit of seeing others succeed in a sport like no other I've ever seen. I saw a Dad (ours), sick with a rare disease rendering him less active than he'd like to be at his age, wanting to jump in and run part of the Ironman with his son because he was just so damned proud of him and wanted to show it. And I saw my "little" brother, participating in the event of his life, smiling every time he saw/heard his family cheer him, staying focused on his goal, crossing that finish line with what appeared to be relative ease, still smiling after nearly 12 hours of the most physical work he'd ever done and exceeding his goal to boot! I could go on and on. And I got to see it all.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to witness something that has truly inspired me like no other event I've ever seen. I may not ever participate in an Ironman, but being able to see the fruits of goal-setting, commitment, determination, perseverance and unconditional love & support right in front of my eyes all in one day, shall not soon be forgotten.

**Congratulations Steve. YOU ARE AN IRONMAN!**

Love, Deb"

To all the soon-to-be first-time Ironmen out there, nervous and excited about your upcoming race, good luck. It's a very special day, and it's an experience you will never forget. May you enjoy every second of it.

-Steve

[Edited by Steve in IL on 2003-08-27 10:43 AM]