

TNT Coach: Kelly Flynn
Location: New Lenox, MA

1. How and why did you become involved in TNT?

- A high school friend passed away from Leukemia in early 2000. He was only 27. I wanted to do something to honor his passing and didn't know what. Then one day I received a purple TNT flier in the mail and it just made sense. I had only run local 5k races, but wanted to take on a bigger challenge and do something meaningful.

2. Have you yourself participated in a TNT event?

- I've run several marathons for TNT, including the Maine Marathon, Dublin Marathon and several Boston Marathons.

3. What do you enjoy most about being a TNT coach?

- I love meeting new people and hearing their stories. Everyone's reason for joining TNT is so different, moving and inspirational. It is just a great honor to be part of a time in their lives when they go from "I can't do this" to see them cross a finish line saying "I just did that."

4. What is the difference between training/coaching novice athletes and experienced athletes?

- There is a great energy that comes with coaching a novice athlete. Every day is something new, each week is a new longest run and personal achievement, and that is pretty awesome to be a part of. An experienced athlete is actually more of a challenge to coach as they know they can do it, they just want to do it better than the last time so they tend to put a lot of pressure on themselves.

5. How do you stay in shape?

- I'm a big believer in "variety is the spice of life." I really like to mix up my workouts so I don't get burnt out on monotony. I make sure each week includes a little Yoga to help calm the mind and stretch the body, but I also like to try something new each season to challenge myself. Right now, my summer workout is paddle boarding. It's a great core and upper body workout and something completely new and different.

6. How do you help participants stay motivated and "up" when the going gets tough?

- Everyone should have a mantra, which could be your reason you signed up in the first place. Something quick and easy they can repeat to themselves when the going gets tough. It could be as simple as a few words, "I'm worth it," "Push Through," "For Dad," or "For Me." Whatever your personal reason for signing up for such a challenge, turn that reason into a short mantra to pump yourself up and to say when the going gets tough out there.

7. What are the most common injuries you've seen among TNT participants and how can they be avoided or dealt with?

- Overuse injuries are the most common, such as runner's knee, strained IT bands and strained Achilles. When people start an endurance program they often take on too much too soon. They have this feeling that, in order to run a marathon, they need to run every day and run long. They don't. People need to remember to start slow, build up those miles gradually and mix in a variety of different types of training for total body conditioning.

8. What should TNT participants eat and drink during their training and the events themselves?

- Nutrition and good hydration are two of the most overlooked elements of training and are often neglected. Everyone needs to remember that their bodies need fuel to move. A lot of novice athletes skip breakfast or don't like to eat before they run and this is a huge mistake.

Everyone should have a good healthy breakfast with a mix of healthy carbs and a little bit of protein before a long run. If they are going to be out running for an hour or more, they need to carry snacks with them to have every 45 minutes to an hour. Those snacks should be easy to digest high carb snacks like energy gels, pretzels or honey. For hydration, my rule of thumb is 8-10 ounces of water or sports drink every 20 minutes.

9. After a rigorous TNT marathon (or other endurance event), how should participants wind down?

- I always tell participants to enjoy the moment. Be present when crossing that finish line, look up and smile for the cameras and wear that medal proudly. Then a few hours after the event, take five minutes to really think about the amazing accomplishment you just achieved and revel in it. You earned that moment.

10. How much money has been raised by the teams you've trained?

- I've been coaching the Boston Marathon Team for the last five years. In those five years, I've helped to train over 800 participants to become Boston Marathoners while we've raised over \$4,000,000.00 together.

11. What is your fondest, stand out memory/ies and accomplishments as a TNT coach?

- I had a teammate who was a survivor. He had this great inspirational story, a wonderful outlook on life and a great heart. He was a really tall guy, a big guy, built for football not running. But he showed up each week, brought tears to everyone's eyes when he told his story and was the biggest cheerleader for our marathon team. The day of the marathon, as he was running down Boylston Street about to become a Boston Marathoner, I read the dedication on the back of his shirt. It said he was running for "The Taken, The Fighters and the Survivors." He was running for himself, but more importantly for all those like him who came before and weren't so lucky in their treatment, and he was running so everyone person in the future who got his diagnosis could be like him, lucky to become a Marathoner. It was just a really special moment.

12. Any final parting words about TNT?

- There is something special about TNT. It is an organization that believes in helping people. Helping find cures for blood cancers. Helping those and their families going through cancer treatment. Helping people who want to make a difference and become endurance athletes. You can sign up and run a marathon on your own. You can sign up and complete a triathlon on your own. But people can do that, train with teammates and raise money for a great cause. People who do that are special.