

JORDAN'S STORY - written 2018

TREK - New Zealand

TREK AGE - 33

WRITING AGE - 36

Advice

Just when you think you're done and can't go anymore, make the choice to push yourself - even just a little - and you'll be surprised what you are capable of.

Story

One of the reasons I decided on the New Zealand trek was to start something, commit to it, and finish it.

On the first day of our trek, the initial plan was to ride 53 miles. This was something I had prepared for. My longest bike ride to date was around 50 miles.

Things changed about halfway through the day as Layne informed us that he had secured a new place for us to stay "just a little past Rakaia." In reality it was an extra 20ish miles.

The day went on and I became more sluggish. The wind was so intense at some points that neither Ammon (my buddy for the trip) or I could even push our bikes.

After quite a while, we finally got to Rakaia Gorge. It was a beautiful sight. Yet mentally I wasn't prepared to keep going and I wasn't sure if I could physically do it either.

I looked at the steep climb out of Rakaia Gorge, the beauty of the scenery, the campground that we were already at, and told myself "This is good enough. I did what I committed to." Both Layne and

Ammon gave me the out and said, we'll stay here tonight with you and catch up to everyone else in the morning."

Deep down though, I knew I could do more, and I certainly didn't want to put out Layne or Ammon. So I decided to continue.

I tried to pedal up the steep incline to the top of the gorge, but made it about 100 yards before I had to get off my bike and push (not an uncommon occurrence that day).

Not too long after we left Rakaia Gorge, the speed demons of the group made it to the house we were staying at. They were able to unpack, set up their tents and relax comfortably in our host's home.

However, It was getting dark - quickly. About an hour into the darkness, we got word that our hosts for the night had a truck and were coming to pick up some of the stragglers to take them to the house.

"Jackpot," I told myself. "That's an easy out. I won't have to pedal anymore on this stupid road. It's cold and dark. Why wouldn't I take the ride?"

As Eric and Kirk finally caught up to us, I can't tell you how tempted I was to throw my bike in the back, get in the heated cab and ride the rest of the 5 miles to the house. Ammon and Layne had already decided that they were going to finish, but that they wouldn't hold it against me if I took the ride.

My natural tendency told me to get in the truck, but my previous decision to go on the trek told me that I needed to decline the ride and finish what I had started.

As the tail lights faded into the darkness in front of me, I asked myself "What did I just do? Am I going to die out here or what?"

I was exhausted, I couldn't feel my fingers, my nose was running, and I was freezing. The next 30 minutes were painful. I rode the rest of the way borrowing light from Ammon and Layne.

When we finally got into the town we were staying at, Layne asked me a question. I don't remember his exact wording, but I do remember my response.

"I'm doing this because I want to get better at perseverance. I've made a habit of starting things and not finishing them. I realize that needs to change."

As we finished the ride we talked more about that and what I had learned that day about myself and my capabilities. It's a lesson that even today (2+ years later) I still remember every detail of.