

RIC Acceptance Speech - Athletic Hall of Fame

I am humbled and honored to receive this award and to be with such phenomenal company. You never know what you will bring to life and how certain parts of your life can sometimes intersect at just the right times.

Last Spring, the high school track team that I coach in Portland OR was coming off an incredible season - PR's, team building, coaching at the State Meet at Hayward Field, and helping with college searches were the highlights. It was an off-the-charts kind of a season. Around the same time, I had just added a bit about RIC in a book that I've been working on for the past year. Within days of our track team celebration and the progress on my book, I received a letter from RIC about being inducted into the Athletic Hall Of Fame. Wow! Me?

Right now, as I speak to you, those athletes from last season are embarking on a Senior Solo Sit where they hike out for a week as a class. In the beginning of their week they separate for 48 hours and sit alone with their thoughts. They fast and they reflect on their journey thus far. I spent the last week or so reflecting and writing to them about the journey that we've shared as athlete and coach. In the moments in between, I've spent some time reflecting on my own journey in preparation for this speech.

Running represents strength. It's been with me for over 25 years. I drew strength from my running to deal with my mom's struggles to beat breast cancer, to deal with middle school bullies, to help me figure out my life at different stages of my life. Running is how I get the strength to keep on pushing in every day life. My beautiful, supportive family and solid friendships have helped build that strength too.

If we are open, life will tell us the direction we should go. One of my tipping points was here, at RIC. It was the last month of my senior year and I sat in our beloved AD's office interviewing him for an article I was writing for The Anchor. I cherished having a few moments with this magnetic human. A particular statement of his jumped out and has stayed with me. Don said, "if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life." I've heard that statement a number of times since then, BUT I heard it first from Don Tencher. It changed my world. RIC gave me the opportunity to search for what I love - (trust me I took full advantage of the price tag and course offerings here). I loved Communications. Don gave me the belief that if I searched for what made me tick inside, I'd also have a love for my work like he did and looks like he still does.

I decided to couple my love of health (which I found through running and certain life experiences) with my love for Communications. Six months after I graduated from RIC I was in the Emerson College & Tufts University Health Communication program. Coupling my loves gave me the type of work that fills your heart. I brought my work to communities in Boston, San Diego, San Francisco, and now Portland, OR. It's often not easy work, but it's fulfilling. I continue to run, 6 days a week, and push my efforts in the field that I love so much with no finish line in sight.

The majority of my college social experience I owe to my fantastic coaches, the RIC athletic staff, and my incredible teammates, who are still some of my dearest friends. I owe a whole lot of my strength to that beautiful track you have just down the path. It was a second home to me for four years. Thank you for your support during my time here and for this honor; it is an incredible gift.

