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# MEMORIAL DAY MURPH CHALLENGE

Memorial Day 2021, I competed in and completed The Murph Challenge. While thousands across the globe did as well, this was a big deal for me. It gives me a valuable story to share to help those I serve professionally.

Telling stories is an incredibly effective way to influence others. And honestly, that is this story's goal. Writing this article, primarily about me, is somewhat uncomfortable. Focusing on others is how I want to work but I am proud and I want my clients to be proud of their accomplishments as well.

What is the Murph Challenge? It's a CrossFit sponsored event held every Memorial Day. The timed workout starts with **a 1-mile run, followed by 100 pullups, 200 pushups, and 300 air squats, and ends with another 1-mile run.** All reps must be full range of motion or they won't count. For the average athlete, it can take roughly an hour to complete. Elite athletes can come in under 40 minutes, wearing a 20-pound vest. Even the world's fittest athletes are left gasping for air making them look mortal which only adds to the workout's legacy.

This Hero workout has military roots and is named in honor of Lt. Michael P. Murphy, a Navy SEAL killed in action in 2005. According to CrossFit, this workout was one of Murphy's favorites. Fees and proceeds benefit military charities and the Lt. Michael P. Murphy Memorial Scholarship Foundation.

In late 2019, while on a plane, I watched a documentary on CrossFit which highlighted Mat Fraser, CrossFit's 5-time Fittest Man on Earth champion. Amazed at his endurance, all I kept thinking was that no human could do what he was doing during competition. Incredible Speed, Power, Strength, Flexibility, Coordination and mostly his Stamina and Endurance. Watching video clips where he dug deep and poured it on in the final seconds to cross that finish line really highlighted his physical and mental preparation.



Right after that plane ride I researched CrossFit and discovered a system that was organized, scientific, methodical, challenging, had expert

trainers and was changing people's lives across the globe. After reading dozens of articles, watching dozens of videos, I discovered The Murph Challenge and this energized me to take my healthy lifestyle to a new level. Combining my desire to grow and my passion to benefit military charities, I made the decision to participate in an official Murph Challenge and join a CrossFit gym. The most difficult hurdle behind me!

In reflecting on my life, my daily routine felt stale. At the office by 615am daily, grind for 10-12 hours, go home, repeat. Even with my work routine, I was always health conscious, eating healthy, no tobacco, no drugs, moderate alcohol, maintaining a good weight and working out regularly....and I took every opportunity to share my "lifestyle" with clients. That fit perfectly with my work because those I help need to be insurable. So their good health is really important. I know I've been a positive influence to many. At the very least I get others thinking about their own lifestyles.

Everyone has a unique desire....to write a book, play better golf or tennis, learn to paint, run a marathon, get their insurance planning in order...etc. It all starts with wanting growth, something new in your life, a change, better results or even different results. If the desire is strong enough, the next step is making the decision to take action. And that involves committing to working with experts to achieve whatever your unique goal may be. The method is always the same...Desire, Decision, Plan, Persistence. Just the outcomes are unique to that individual.

My first day training at CrossFit was a bust. Due to Covid precautions, we were outside and that particular class had a lot of running. I could barely make it back to the gym on the final 400-meter run. All the others working out were gathered and cheering me on to keep running. One of them actually ran out to me and helped me finish. And I thought I was in shape! The first

of many important lessons learned through my new endeavor was that everyone needs a little help getting over that first finish line.

In changing up my daily routine, my first challenge was to prepare my mind to break a long and old habit of getting into the office early. The next challenge was working out at an intense level those early mornings. It was critical that I had the support of expert CrossFit trainers with specialized knowledge and experience to help me grow, pushing me where appropriate yet always respecting and protecting my body. Without their help I likely would have hurt myself and been on an on-going ice, Advil and muscle rub routine or even worse, scheduled for my next sports related surgery. Protection AND Growth. With the right guidance, you CAN have both. Another important lesson learned; work with experts and get to that finish line quicker with less setbacks. A key to long term results.



Fast forward 11 months. We're one week before Memorial Day and I wondered if CrossFit would ramp down their workouts. Maybe they would let everyone participating in the Murph have some time to recharge. Ramp down? Nope! Workouts were ramped up. Another lesson learned. Don't break momentum!

Finally Memorial Day Murph was here and the gym was electric. The energy and excitement was powerful. I was prepared but a bit nervous. I had played out the event in my head a thousand times. How I was going to pace the miles, how many seconds to rest and at what intervals during the body weight exercises, remembering my breathing techniques, what I should be eating that week and that morning, the list goes on. I visualized running the second mile with a giant smile on my face knowing I was almost there.



As the gun sounded, we were off. I was on pace to break my goal but exhaustion showed its' ugly face and left me gasping for breath at the final mile. I can assure you there was no smile on my face. One of my trainers ran with me the first of three laps. He made sure I kept moving. Then the second lap, a fellow practitioner and his daughter ran with me. On the third and final lap I was joined by yet another trainer. She also kept me moving when I wanted desperately to stop and

catch my breath. With the finish line just 100 yards in front, she encouraged me to sprint, empty the tank, cross that finish line giving it all I had. Then I can rest. And I did. Once again, I got help crossing that finish line. My goal was to break 50 minutes. I completed the Murph in 47:50 at age 62. Mission accomplished.

The Murph was my unique desire but everyone has their own "Murph". It's all the same, just different. Regardless of what your unique desire is, it starts with making a decision and getting some expert guidance. That begins the process of getting new results. CrossFit training has its' parallels with my work. My clients come to me for expert insurance advice. I help them establish a plan of Protection AND Growth and it too starts with desire and decision. Then you can begin the process of analyzing where you are compared to where you want to be, develop a plan and commit to persistence, making adjustments when needed. You'll build financial strength and flexibility. You'll have safety and security with less risk. Once you say "yes" to yourself, the pressure will be behind you. You'll be proud and have that smile on your face once you cross that first finish line ... and I'll be by your side.

*In 1985, Ed Gaelick, CLU, ChFC, established PSI Consultants, LLC, where he specializes in life, disability, long term care insurance, employee and executive benefits. Throughout his career, Ed has earned many of the highest professional honors awarded in the insurance industry. [www.psi-consultants.com](http://www.psi-consultants.com)*