

## Laurie Lasseter Testimonial

### Client: Peter van Gemmeren / Age 45

My wife Catherine and I started running about 3 years ago. As a bicycle commuter, I considered myself in decent shape, and running would give me more opportunity for friendly competition in local charity 5K runs. I finished my first 5K in 22:38 minutes and we started training for longer distances and faster speed. Initially, hard work was rewarded with good progress, and we moved on to 10K, half marathon and then the marathon. Running had become an important part of our life, in fact, I proposed to my wife after her first marathon (and my 2nd).

But as I was increasing my mileage to prepare for these longer races, I struggled more and more with injuries, making running less fun and more of a chore. Fortunately the injuries were not too serious, but it wasn't uncommon that I had a limp on the Monday after a long run. These training interruptions were hurting my progress.

Still, I managed to break the 20 minute mark on a 5K and to get within striking distance of Boston Marathon Qualification (I ran 3:28:05 at the 2013 Fox Valley and needed 3:25 to qualify). Far too early in my 'running career', I started dreaming of going to Boston and I was somewhat proud to have gotten this close, but at the same time, I felt I would never be able to improve beyond this level. My hips would bother me too much. Ligaments in my feet would hurt. If I managed to add a few miles in one week, I would suffer the next week. Often frustration was the fruit of my hard work. So the fun of running was fading a little.

For my birthday, my wife got us personal training sessions with Laurie Lasseter. I wasn't sure what I needed a running trainer for. Okay, Laurie has great credentials (many, many marathons including several Bostons). But I did my runs (at least if I wasn't injured) and had no idea how she could make me any faster.

At the first personal training session, Laurie had us do a bunch of exercises and inventoried our strengths and weaknesses - there was no running. I had heard of some of these exercises before and had attempted doing them in the past, but often I didn't quite get them right and I was afraid to do more bad than good. With Laurie's instruction and help, I learned how to do these exercises correctly and to feel how they helped me to improve the strength of my core, hips and ankles.

We also take Laurie's RunSMARTrunner strength training small-group personal training class where we are doing some of the same exercises in a small group of runners. In the past, strengthening and stretching my muscles was more a necessary evil, but as Laurie showed us to do them right they have become fun (kind of;)).

But would I get faster while training with Laurie? We don't run together and I couldn't see how a stronger hip abductor makes me a faster runner. And it didn't (at first), but something more important happened: Injuries became rare - I could run until I was out of breath, until my legs ached from fatigue or until I was just out of time - rather than having to stop because my hip stung me with inflammation or my ankle swelled. And so running was fun again. It's still hard work (isn't that the fun part?), but I felt accomplished doing it.

Running is an important part of Catherine's and my lives. Boston may just be a dream, but the good feelings we get from running (in addition to all the health benefits and even social connections) are real. So for Laurie to be able to restore the fun of running in our lives was a much bigger gain than shaving a few minutes off my marathon time.

So I wasn't too terribly disappointed when I ran a 3:26:37 at Fox Valley 2014 (a Personal Record, but short of my Boston Marathon qualifying time). Laurie actually showed up for the race to cheer for us and another client. I was almost resigned to put the dream of Boston on the backburner.

Laurie has run Boston a few times and knows how hard it is to qualify. She recognizes what it takes to even get close to qualifying. But she told me that she knows that I had what it takes to run a sub 3:25 marathon. She helped me tweak my taper, was there to discuss the bridge training for the next few weeks until the Naperville Marathon and of course we continued her Personal Training classes.

I didn't need a long recovery from Fox Valley, there weren't any injuries, even after having run 26.2 miles. Certainly the result of taking RunSMART classes and Personal Training for the last several months. Running is fun again. Catherine and I married on the day of the Chicago marathon (which we did not run).

I wasn't sure if I just had to let go of my Boston dream. That's okay, most runners don't even get close. Giving up on the idea of running in Boston might have been hard, but it's better than getting injured. But Laurie just seemed so darn certain that I could do it. And when it was time for the Naperville Marathon, she came out to cheer again. But this time I made it in 3:22:10, qualifying for Boston with almost 3 minutes to spare, which means I am going to run the Boston Marathon in 2016! And no injuries!

Bottom line is, as personal or small-group trainer, Laurie will:

- Make you do exercises you have been avoiding
  - But she shows you to do them right so they are less awful (and safer).
- Strengthen your body (core, hips and ankles) to avoid injuries and preserve the fun of running.
- Take part in your running life, e.g. show up when you get your first winner medal.
- Be there for any questions you have about running.

**But one thing Laurie won't have you do is to give up on your dream, she'll make you get there.**

