

Fauja's Adventure

Life is an adventure for Fauja Singh. In 2011, he became the first 100-year-old to finish a marathon. He retired from running when he was 104, but he still exercises everyday at the age of 110. No one would have predicted these accomplishments when Fauja was born. But his adventurous approach to life means that anything is possible.

Fauja Singh was born in Punjab, India, in 1911. His legs were thin and weak, and doctors said he would never walk on his own. He was teased and called danda, which means stick in Punjabi. Despite these setbacks, Fauja never gave up learning to walk. When he was 5 years old, after a lot of hard work, he took his first steps. This spirit of perseverance served him well later in his life when he took up running.

As a young man, Fauja enjoyed running. But as he grew older, work and family took up most of his time. He stopped running for many years.

After the death of his wife, Fauja moved to England to be near his adult children. It was there, when he was 81, that he saw a marathon broadcasted on TV. He remembered what it felt like to run as a young man, and he decided to try the sport again. He trained for several years and finished his first marathon in London at the age of 89.



Fauja is a member of the religious and ethnic community of Sikhs. Unfortunately, Sikhs are often the target of racism, particularly because Sikh men are easily recognized by the turbans that they wear. After the events of September 11, 2001, there was a great deal of racism toward Sikhs in the United States. Fauja decided to run in the New York City marathon, at the age of 93, to show people what Sikhs could achieve. He became an inspiration for the running community, both Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike.

Fauja is also an inspiration to his family, reminding them of the importance of exercise and healthy eating. He enjoys gardening and listening to music. Most importantly, say his grandchildren, he is kind and never raises his voice. Fauja has taught his family that it is never too late to have adventures if you follow your dreams.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What name was Fauja called when he was a child?
 - a. Singh
 - b. Stick
 - c. Danda
 - d. Dash

2. What inspired Fauja to take up running again at age 83?
 - a. Seeing a marathon on TV
 - b. Moving to England
 - c. Racism towards Sikhs
 - d. Being teased for his weak legs

3. Which of the following activities is NOT mentioned as a favorite of Fauja?
 - a. Running
 - b. Gardening
 - c. Listening to music
 - d. Cooking

4. Which characteristic of Fauja's do you think is most inspirational to his grandchildren?
 - a. Perseverance
 - b. Kindness
 - c. Fitness
 - d. Adventurousness

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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