

Drew Herrmann



On March 12, 2007, I bought a bicycle with the sole purpose of becoming a triathlete. Earlier in the day, I had been sitting at work listening to Tri Fox Brenda Simril talk about another endurance race that she and Lee had completed.

I decided that my life needed to change. I needed to get on living it because what I was doing - nothing combined with drinking a lot of beer - was going to slowly kill me.

To understand how I got to that point, I have to hit the rewind button exactly 10 years to the day. In 1997, as a senior in high school and constantly plagued by headaches, I found myself standing in the hospital, looking at some MRI's and being told by a radiologist that I had a brain tumor.Um, Houston, we have a problem... Nothing clears and focuses the mind like a death sentence. With a lot of medical attention and modern pharmaceuticals, I was able to overcome the tumor and emerge no worse for wear. I did have a new outlook on life with a focus on having fun. Being a young man headed off to college in the U.P., that included drinking, hunting and fishing, and very little else. Needless to say, my new lease on life was actually making me less healthy.

So there I was on the 10 year anniversary of my diagnosis, buying a bike - 320 lbs

of couch potato with a mission. I rode my bike until I had lost enough weight to run, then I ran until I hurt myself, then I joined the local Y and swam. As a little kid, my parents had forced me to be on the swim team in 2nd and 3rd grade. I don't remember much about the experience, but swimming seemed easy compared to cycling and running, so I did a lot of it.

With some prodding from Lee and Brenda, I ran the Green Bay 5k and then chose High Cliff as my first triathlon. The race started well and I was loving the experience. Half way through the bike leg, my crank arm fell off my bike and I DNF'd. Feeling like I had to prove something, I found the next available race and did that one, then another, and another till the summer was over and I felt great about what I had done (I think I did a total of 12 races that first summer...I guess I've got an addictive personality problem).

I returned to High Cliff in 2008 and conquered my demons as well as completing my first half ironman in Michigan that summer. I felt like I finally had something positive to focus my energy on, and I liked it.

I must admit that when I first heard Brenda talk about the events that she did, I thought to myself, "Who in their right mind would PAY to subject themselves to pain, misery, and anguish – with a strong chance of injury?" But I can also say that if it weren't for her and Lee planting a seed in my mind, that I'd still be a couch potato that had the wrong outlook on life.

