

**'You don't know you can, until you try'.
My story of becoming a runner by Sue Francis.**

I had tried hard at winning that race, but teacher sniggered at the unexpected first position. I gave up after that, it wasn't worth the humiliation.

Fast forward 40 years later.

'Mum, will you do parkrun with me?

'Mark, I can't run'.

Off we set. Mark, yelling, *'you are going too fast, you will run out of steam.'* I finished my very first parkrun in 30 minutes. *'Well done, fab time you got, will you come next week?'* Said the marshal who knew it was my first time.

'Mum, will you come running on Tuesday?' Despite my doubts of my ability I did. This decision to go became life changing. *'Mum you are going too fast'*, I left Mark behind and followed some runners to the Nostell gates. I felt exhilarated running all the way back to the club and surprised myself with my efforts. *'You coming next week?'* somebody asked. *'Yes, I really loved it, thank you.'*

Before long I joined Ackworth Road Runners getting to know some lovely people. Somebody asked, *'have you signed up for any races?'*

No, I'm not good enough' I replied.

With encouragement I signed up for the Tadcaster 10, to my surprise I finished. After that I signed up for longer races. At Awards night I got a few trophies, the girl who thought she couldn't run because a teacher had sneered.

So, I have learned, you can do things if you try and ignore negativity. It doesn't matter if you are first or last. I never imaged winning a good for age place at the Yorkshire and London Marathons. I never imagined I would win medals and trophies and develop the runners bug. It all started with a park to keep my son company and continued with longer races.

I really miss my running family who have encouraged me all the way. I couldn't have done it without my own family, my loving supportive husband who patiently awaits me on the finish even when he has to help me climb all those steps from Brighton Beach because my legs stopped working.

I couldn't have done it without our club leaders and trainers and all the efforts they go to on training sessions. Thank you all, including Chris, Stewart and of course our Pat who shouts to me 'go chase them' so I did.

Sue Francis, May 2020