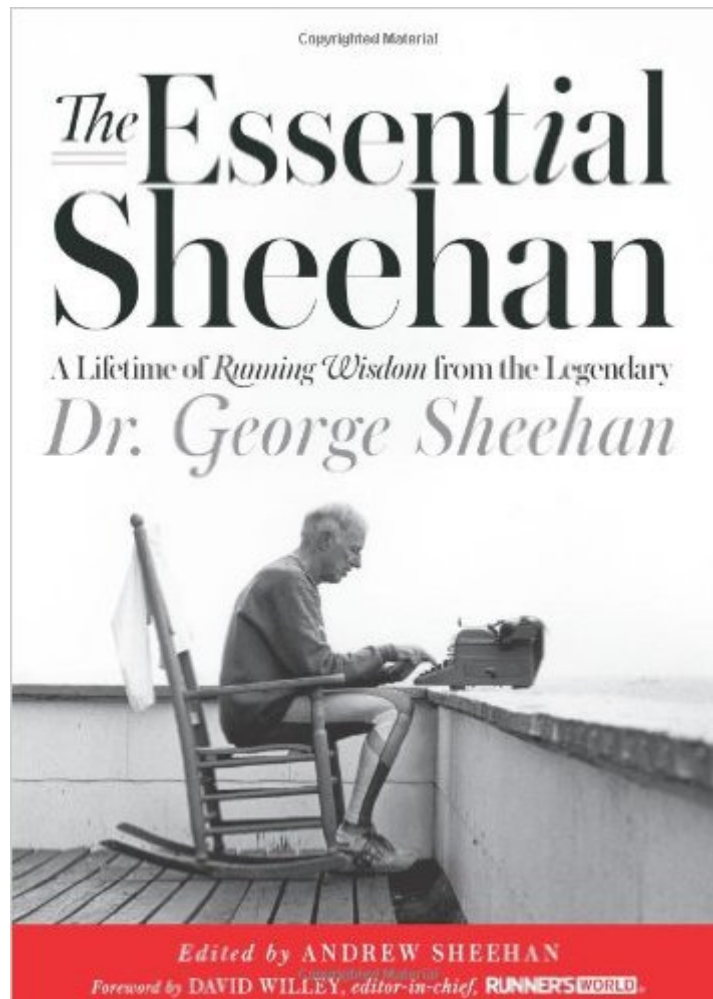


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The Essential Sheehan: A Lifetime Of Running Wisdom From The Legendary Dr. George Sheehan



Synopsis

Runners and readers whose connections to the sport date back to the 1970s surely remember Dr. George Sheehan, the New Jersey cardiologist and writer whose unique approach to the joy of exercise helped spark America's fitness boom. As a columnist for his local Red Bank Register and later as the medical editor of Runner's World and through eight bestselling books, Sheehan became, through the influence of his example and writing, the spokesperson for an entire generation of runners and the manifold benefits they discovered through the running lifestyle. Sadly, several of Sheehan's books are now out of print, and the hundreds of newspaper magazine columns he penned over the last 25 years of his life have been lost to time. Until now. The Essential Sheehan is a collection of the best running pieces George Sheehan wrote in his lifetime, many of which ran in Runner's World when Sheehan was a columnist there. This collection illuminates Sheehan's lasting influence on running culture and is a reintroduction of George Sheehan to a new generation of runners and readers.

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Customer Reviews

Dr. George Sheehan was a cardiologist, runner, writer, and philosopher. Yet no label is sufficient for him. And of all that's been written about him, I wasn't truly impressed until I read this book and heard from Dr. Sheehan himself. There is something in his writing that makes this book hard to put down. It's honest and insightful, direct and inspiring. Sheehan's voice is like Thoreau's (whom he often quotes): calm and wise, inviting us to walk along with him. In the process, he stirs our deepest desire to be great. This is the kind of writing I always look for, but seldom find. Sheehan loved

running. He loved running in every season, and in any condition. He loved the soul cleansing affect it had on him, he loved the agony of pushing himself to the limit in every race, and he loved both the solitude and the camaraderie he found in running. And he wanted others to share that love. Sheehan believed that life should be simple, that people needed to free themselves from the things that squash creativity and play. Play, he believed, was serious business, and people should make time for it: "Certainly, a case can be made that the true object of life is play." For Sheehan, running was play. Throughout these writings, we hear the importance of becoming the best we can physically, mentally, and spiritually. Sheehan urges readers to be heroic, something he believed could happen through running: "This stage on which we can be bigger than life is a place where we can exhibit all that is good in us. Courage and determination, discipline and willpower, the purging of all negative impulses--we see that we are indeed whole and holy." The Essential Sheehan is a treasure for runners, especially those of us who are getting older.

If you've spent any time in runners' circles, you've heard a quote by George Sheehan. He is perhaps the grandfather of running writers, the spiritual Obi-Wan Kenobi whose happy ghost looks over us all. Many months ago, Rodale sent me "The Essential Sheehan" to review, and I've found it to be a treasure chest of running wisdom. It took me a while to read only because I did so in snippets, which to me is what makes the book work. It is a series of articles written throughout his life, none of which take more than a few minutes to read, but all of them with something that will make you think and add to your running life. I knew Sheehan was a mind-body-spirit runner, with all sorts of quotes to evoke emotions, but I had no idea that Sheehan was also a great source of training theories that are practical and tangible. He heralded the power of intervals, how to train muscles that need strengthening for injury prevention, and running less junk miles. I was very happy to read him write, in so many words or less, "I can comfortably run a marathon on 30 miles a week" since that is about all I can get to these days. Some articles were dated and wore their tube socks, but this added to the charm. Other subjects included the communal nature of races, the role of natural highs as opposed to alcohol use, and a goody bag full of spiritual inspiration. This is a book which lends itself to hardcover, to be read many times over and flipped open to random pages, and should have a place on your coffee table, next to your bed, or perhaps the perfect toilet reader. Since some runners may hesitate to buy a hardcover for themselves, this makes it a perfect gift. Huge thanks to both Dr. George Sheehan for his words and to Rodale for this gift.

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