

## My Marathon Mission – How I failed to become a great runner

Lothar Koopmann

### SALES HANDLE

Fun reading for all those who have ever thought of jogging ... or done so.

### DESCRIPTION

Lothar Koopmann, once a rather chubby young boy from a working class family in the Rhine region, has gone on to pursue sport seriously: previously an occasional jogger, he has now joined a running group with his wife, Christa, which takes him wheezing and sweating along ever longer routes through fields, woods and meadows. And now he is finally fulfilling his dream of running a marathon.

His fond memories are punctuated with unusual happenings and exciting encounters along the way in this tongue-in-cheek tale of the delights of running and the plight of training.

Cartoonist Thomas Plassmann depicts 'My Marathon Mission' in the form of humorous sketches throughout the author's journey to his destination.

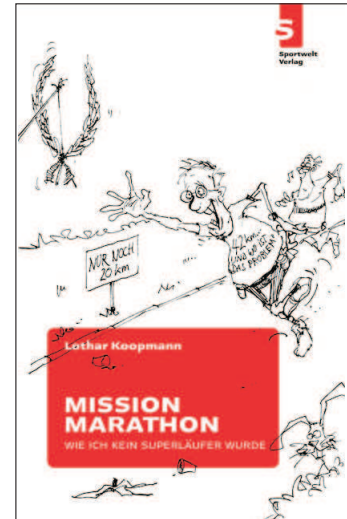
### KEY SELLING POINTS

- Running is experiencing a historic boom in participation.
- Last year, more Germans ran marathons and half-marathons than ever before.
- This newfound popularity means more runners want to read about their hobby.
- You can never have too much fun. So funny books will always sell.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lothar Koopmann (born in 1952) lives in Duisburg and is heading a cabaret ensemble.

Thus far, he has run eight marathons, and his first work not only reflects his experience as a runner but also his long-standing expertise in handling the German language.



**ISBN-13:** 978-3-941297-04-3

**Pages:** 256

**Trim:** 11.8 x 18.8 cm  
(4.64" x 7.40")

**Format:** Trade Paper

**Price:** 8.95 EUR

**# and Type of illustrations:**  
28 cartoons

**Category:** Humour/Satire,  
Running & Jogging



Lothar Koopmann

## **Publisher's note**

Due to a regrettable error, comments added to the manuscript by the editor and sales manager were included in the book when it entered the final production phase.

We are still seeking the perpetrator of this error and hope that he or she does not work on our publishing team. If so then the guilty party will not be working with us for much longer!

We considered blackening out, cutting out or pasting over the footnotes or even halting delivery of the books – but all of these measures would have been too expensive and would have brought the publishing house to the brink of financial ruin.

Given the significant number of pre-orders from the book trade of almost 111 copies, we therefore decided to release the author's account onto the market as it stood.

It's up to the reader whether or not to read the comments; they are not necessary to understanding the text and in fact are somewhat superfluous.

We would like to request your understanding on this manner and hope you enjoy the read. We would also like to draw your attention to some other books we have published – all of our other titles are free from comments and are ideal for reading anywhere, even in bed!

## Flow



MICHAEL: Right.

AXEL: What, right?

MICHAEL: Go past.

AXEL: What, past?

MICHAEL: We should have gone right.

AXEL: Where?

MICHAEL: On that road.

AXEL: Why?

MICHAEL: Because we should have gone right there!

ME: (Should have ...)

AXEL: Why didn't you say so? I can't react that quickly in the middle of a run.

MICHAEL: For God's sake, if I say it too early you forget it again before we reach the turn.

AXEL: The problem is that you can't look far enough ahead to say it in time.

ME: (Should have...)

MICHAEL: Let's take a little detour, it's not too bad, just a few kilometres. We go past the golf club then right, left at the paddock then we're back on the old route.

ME: (If Christa doesn't confuse everything with her route dementia.)

CHRISTA: What I wanted to say...

ME: (Too late)

CHRISTA: ... we've never run here before, have we?

MICHAEL: Yes, two weeks ago during that downpour when it was in the 20s, but we went the other way around.

CHRISTA: That's what I said; we've never done it this way.

ME: (Should have ...)

AXEL: Lothar, don't you have anything to add? We don't hear a word from you unless it's about maths and figures, you ol' fool.

ME: Just a minute, I'm thinking.

AXEL: And what about, might I ask?

ME: We should have written it all down.

MICHAEL: Written what down, what do you mean?

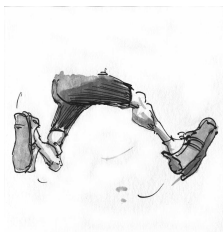
ME: All of that nonsense. The fact that Christa can't remember the routes and that Angelika doesn't believe in herself when she's actually great at running. And just how it all went, the marathons, with you, how it all started and so on.

MICHAEL: You want to write that down? Why?

ME: So that people can read about it.

ANGELIKA: Read what?

ME: How I failed to become a great runner.



## The fat boy

The melancholy and the serious authors –  
He who reduces to paper what he is suffering  
will be a melancholy author.

A serious author however, is one who tells us  
what he has suffered and why he is now reposing in joy.

**Friedrich Nietzsche\***

When I was little, I was fat. Almost square with fatness. Or perhaps rounded. I had practically no corners or edges, inside and out. “Full fat,” as Anna would have said. And Katrin would have nodded: “Yeah!” I was always satisfied with my slow movement. And the food my mother gave me. A couple of bread rolls for breakfast followed by cornflakes, some hearty sandwiches for break time, a good lunch after school, a small slice of cake in the afternoon sometimes, perhaps with cream, and a delicious evening meal with soup and sandwiches. It was plenty for me. My parents and teachers praised by undemanding attitude in all things; I was no swot and was always satisfied with my average grades, as long as I got a B or more and I didn’t have to bust a gut to get it.

I never imagined I’d ever be committed to sport. Although I must have had the traits needed to become an athlete or perhaps even a great runner. My father was an industrial worker and worked very hard on the early, midday and night-time shifts. He was tough as leather, hard as steel and fast as a greyhound. At home, he was always tired and recuperating. He may not have used that word himself, but he did everything he could to give his body the rest it needed. He would sleep in the afternoon before a night shift, in the morning before a midday shift and go to bed very early in the evening before an early shift.

My mother was a housewife run off her feet looking after her child and doing up our small and cramped apartment. However, she was always calm and motivated. She would learn the daily TV schedule by heart and then implement what she had learnt to see how true it was. Surely the ideal situation for creating the genes of an athlete. Rest following exertion and exertion following rest. And vice versa.

The climax of my initial attempt at sport came one Spring evening when my mother called out to my father, who was dozing on the sofa: “Karl, the little one is too fat”. “Mmhm” was the response which came back. So my father wasn’t quite asleep. Not yet. “We have to do something!” “Mmhm”. “Karl, do you have any ideas?” “Let him go running?”

\* Editor’s comment: Nietzsche, Nietzsche, wasn’t that the man with the whip?  
Sales manager’s comment: No, I think that was Zorro or Buffalo Bill.

Had my mother known my father a bit better, which you would expect given their 12 years of marriage and raising of an 11-year old boy together, she would have understood the significance of this sleepy suggestion. ‘Let him go running’ – laissez faire, wait, see what happens. But my mother went beyond taking his words literally and devised her own solution to the problem: running and sport.

This was not a bad thing to do in my father’s eyes, as he was a football fan in the Ruhr region. And so I registered with the local football team and began to develop my sporting skills, motivated by the rousing words of sporting wisdom: ‘In play means anything before the end of the game’ and ‘Offside means when the ball is on the move’. When surrounded by 20 children my age, I defended the leather ball with all my strength beneath my fat belly – that is, whenever they all chased the ball and knocked me over when I happened to be close to the action. Otherwise I preferred to watch the crowd chase the ball from afar and whenever the ball threatened to approach, I would inspect the shoelaces on my boots in great detail.



My career as a future sports star ended after just four weeks. But not before I almost played in a match where I sat on the reserves bench as the 6th substitute and failed to make it onto the pitch, despite our significant 7:0 lead. My mother borrowed some scales from a neighbour and realised that I had lost an unbelievable 150 grams which my father then projected and interpolated to falling within the broad 500 gram category. And so the experiment was brought to an end.

My father and I retained a manly silence about the fact that our walk home from training always had taken us past some of the local culinary establishments and, of course, we had been unable to resist their enticing offers of freshly pulled beer (for him) and hand-made meatballs (for me).

This break from sport was so deep and significant that I did not actively pursue sport again in my life for many years and the rapid increase in football matches shown on TV in the 1960s was more than adequate as a substitute.\*\*

\*\* Editor’s comment: So when does he finally get to the running?