
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

VIRTUOSITY

Virtuosity 2: A Friend in Need

BayState CrossFit community pulls together in a time of loss.

By Anne-Marie McClintock

November 2014



Courtesy of Mary Ellen Weeks

Anne-Marie McClintock, sixth from right in purple shoes, surrounded by her BayState CrossFit community.

I look down at my vibrating phone on my desk. It reads "Gregg M." It is 7:01 a.m., 5:01 a.m. his time, May 8, 2014.

Why is he calling me?

We haven't spoken since I moved from Colorado to Massachusetts nine months earlier. I go back to my work. If he leaves a message, I'll know something is wrong. Even then, I know a voicemail is coming. I know nothing good can come from a 5-a.m. phone call.

1 of 2

Two Hours Later

I just want to go home and hide, but my colleagues won't let me. I have just barely started to build friendships in this new town, and I'm not sure whom I should call. As a matter of fact, making new friends in a new place was harder than I expected, so I joined CrossFit. I thought for an hour a day they would have to hang out with me, and maybe I would make a few friends. I pick up my phone and call Kristen from the box. I can barely breathe, but I gasp out, "Kristen? Warren's been killed in a car accident. I won't make it to class tonight." Then I hang up.

This is where time and memory deceive me. Life begins to blur. I am numb. Someone drives me home. Mary Ellen, a friend from CrossFit, is waiting at my doorstep. Kristen called everyone I'm remotely close with from our box, and they all dropped everything to come take care of me. Everyone floods in with food, hugs and conversation.

I wake up the next morning thinking it was all a horrible nightmare, but within seconds reality slaps my heart: My fiancé is really dead.

I want to stay in my bed and never come out. Mary Ellen, Chrissy and Kristen will not have it. They drag me to class that morning.

I zone out and put all my focus on the weights. Unfortunately, halfway through the workout, reality comes rushing back in as waves of tears. I try to focus on the music but my body is giving up. Before I know it, James Giles, my coach, is standing right beside me.

"Come on, Anne-Marie. Don't give up now. Get that bar up. You can do it!" Everyone in the box comes to my side as I finish that workout. In that moment I know I have not just found friends. I have a family.

Lost and Found

It has been four months and 13 days. Every day, I continue on a journey of understanding and healing, and BayState CrossFit has become my therapy. My friendships with my coaches and my fellow athletes are the best friendships I have ever had.

"The real workout starts when you want to stop," I once read.

My BayState family will never, ever let me stop.

And that means everything.



Submission Guidelines

To be considered for publication, authors must satisfy the following:

1. Articles must be original, unpublished works. Authors of selected submissions will be supplied with legal documents to be filled out prior to publication.
2. Articles must be submitted in Word documents attached to an email. Documents should not contain bolding, italics or other formatting. Please submit in Arial font.
3. Articles can be 500 words maximum.
4. Each article must be accompanied by at least one high-resolution photograph to illustrate the story. The photo can feature the coach, the affiliate, the community—anything that illustrates the article. Photo guidelines are as follows:

- A. Photos must be original and owned by the person submitting. Photos taken by others may be submitted provided the owner has given permission.
- B. Photos must be in focus, well lit and free of watermarks. Minimum file size is 1 MB. Please review your camera's settings to ensure you are shooting high-resolution images. Cell-phone photos and thumbnails are not accepted.
- C. Photos must be attached to the email as JPEG files. Do not embed files in Word documents. Photo file names should list both the name of the subject and the name of the photographer in this format: SubjectName-PhotographerName.jpg. Examples: JohnSmith-JaneDoe.jpg or CrossFitAnyTown-JimJohnson.jpg.

Virtuosity@crossfit.com is open for submissions. Tell us why you train where you train, and do it uncommonly well.