

In one of my first blog posts, I wrote: "I'm thinking of entering AT8. This way I know I'll just get there, get to where I've never been before, travel the road I've travelled so many times, but getting to the end this time." I never expected what was coming.

This is the first time I stuck with a program, and the first time I entered a competition like this. It's one of the hardest things I have ever done in my life, and I've done a lot of things, taken up on a lot of challenges. Making it to the photo shoot was like making it to graduation. It was a hardcore learning process. I studied philosophy. Introspection and self-observation are not new to me. But doing so while putting myself under a self-imposed regimen in search of self-improvement, and sticking with it to the end... Now, that's different.

Going through my blog posts, I realize how my mind and my feelings reached opposites, different states... sometimes I was fully motivated and energized, others I was depressed, others I was just moving along. I had moments of true joy, moments of wanting to quit, moments of doubts, moments of total trust and conviction.

And all along, I stuck with it, I remained consistent in the training and the diet (not that I did not have my slips, oh boy, I had many!), and that, in the end brought the results. I love to drink wine, I love to drink beer, and I love to eat and barbecue every weekend. I was able to do all those things, but smartly. Basically, paying attention to what I was doing in all the other times in which I was not drinking wine, not drinking beer, and not barbecuing or eating like a maniac. I kept it simple, trusted the AI guys (always did), and kept going, always.

I cannot leave the community out of this essay. Their support, their experiences, their victories and downfalls, and being able to share and ask for help when needed, that was just an essential part of the process and intrinsic to the achieved results.

I thank everyone there deeply. As well as I thank John Barban, Brad Howard and Brad Pilon. I listened to the podcasts every day, over and over. I just immersed myself in this way of life they have introduced us to, and destroyed any urge and thought of runaway.

There's so much I could write, a lot more, but I'll have to leave it here.

I'm content, satisfied, and admired at myself.