This was the age-old guestion that I sought to answer before making the decision to put down my hard-earned dineros on a registration last July 2004. with countless athletes over the years \* as a physical therapist and coach - and I ve heard many describe their varied motivators for partaking in their sport activities. Each has had their own very personal reason, and I sought the deeper meaning behind mine. When the chips are down, you look to those deeper meanings and I wanted to make sure that I had them. Many are motivated by the physical challenge. Many are motivated by self-validation. I remember watching the DVD from IMUSA 2003, the last time I d watched the race as a spectator. In it was a woman that said that Ironman was going to be the greatest day in her life. I stopped for a moment and came to realization number one: I was NOT looking for the \*greatest day in my life. It was a powerful realization because at that moment, I had a (not so subtle) reminder that my life has been full of wonderful experiences, that I am very fortunate to have gone down the paths in life that I have because they have made me the man that I am now. This thought truly put me at ease & because now I knew why I wasn to doing this so onwards to finding out why I REALLY wanted to do it. ago, I was sitting on the patio with Richard (my best friend for the last 35 years) and we were (nonchalantly, I might add) discussing &doing an Ironman before we turned 40 . Hahaha. Well, I hadnot given it much serious thought at the time, and frankly it wasnot even on my radar. Those who know me well know that I really didnot have much desire to do one. But the initial conversation was intriguing and if there was anyone in the world that I would enjoy experiencing the event with, it would be Richard. We ve shared a lot over the course of the past 35 years. It s hard to believe this story starts back in nursery school! Many of you probably don t know much about my history. As a child, I suffered from Crohn♦s disease ♦ an inflammatory bowel disease. I was diagnosed when I was 15 ♦ at a time when I was 4080 tall and 68 pounds though they think I had had it since I was 8 or 9. When I was first admitted to the hospital (a 17 day stay), I was told I was very fortunate to be alive. As a side effect of the Prednisone I was taking for my Crohn s, I developed some longstanding issues with my knees. I had essentially been told then that activities like running wouldnot be a part of my future. Period. End of conversation. Next patient please. forward to 2004. \$\phi \$o why was I even thinking about any of this nonsense? After thinking about it deeply, and having a stealth discussion with Kurt, Shelley, and Clark (over a Freebird s burrito anything can get accomplished!) before anyone caught wind of the idea - I realized that it was all about the mental challenge. All of the most significant accomplishments in my life consisted of overcoming a mental barrier \* and even though Crohn♦s disease was a physical struggle, the mental challenge of ♦getting on with life on my terms was still tremendous. validate me. I didnot need to prove anything to myself or anyone else. Hell, after all these years, nothing needed to be proven in my eyes. As a PT, I had put back together countless elite and recreational athletes, allowing them to pursue their goals. As a coach, I had guided over 30 Ironman finishers and had a few qualify for the World Championships. I certainly had an intimate view and knowledge of the world of Ironman already. I was active and healthy. Why bother with all of this? It came down to one simple factor - I needed to know if I was strong enough mentally to do the necessary training and to race the day on my terms. So with the realization of having nothing to prove, having already had a life full of wonderful experiences, and the potential to watch Kurt get a maple leaf tattoo if I finished (nothing beats an external motivator!), I registered for the event. I emailed Richard, telling him