

Taking Your Life to New Heights

On May 21, 2006, I realized that I was not going to summit Mt. Everest. I was 450 meters from the summit; the temperature was -40° F; the wind was picking up, and I was struggling. Within 48 hours of choosing to turn around, I knew that I would return to Everest.

My journey to the roof of the world changed my life forever. The lessons I learned on two expeditions to the north side of Everest have improved both my personal and professional lives.

Dream Patiently with Purpose

In 1979, I read the account of Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler climbing Mt. Everest for the first time without oxygen. I knew then that I wanted to climb to the highest point on our planet.

My climbing partners laughed at me. But as the years passed, I revisited that dream every climbing season. Over the years, I learned that you can spend your days dreaming, but without putting a plan of action in place, your dreams will continue to be dreams. By being patient and keeping our dreams alive we progress purposefully, enhancing our potential. By patiently keeping my dream alive, I found myself on a second journey to Kathmandu, Nepal, in April 2007.

Manage Your Energy

If you could miraculously position a climber on the summit of Mt. Everest without acclimatizing, they would be dead within half an hour. On any big mountain, you learn that, in order to adjust, you need to “climb high” and “sleep low,” pushing your limits then recharging your batteries.

We can apply this principle to our own lives. To operate at the cutting edge of our careers and lives, we must take some time out. “Sleeping low” is about finding balance in our lives through the Whole Person Concept.

Generate Activity

You reach the summit of Mt. Everest by taking one slow step after the other. Climbing the mountain of life requires placing one foot in front of the other daily. In the financial planning business, our level of activity often determines our level of success. If you ever find yourself struggling, persevere and increase your activity.

Amass and Apply Knowledge

Knowledge provides us with expertise, which enables us to be prepared well in advance of facing tough challenges. As my climbing partner and I were making our final push to the summit of Mt. Everest, we faced many technical challenges, any one of which could have cost us our lives. Without the knowledge gathered in advance of our climb, we would have surely died.

A Series of Everests

As I sat atop Mt. Everest on May 23, 2007, I realized that I had been climbing a series of Everests all of my life. And so it is with us all; a summit awaits daily. By applying these principles, we can achieve peak performance and reach new heights.

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