

# The Courage to Succeed

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*"The sea is dangerous and its storms terrible, but these obstacles have never been sufficient reason to remain ashore...unlike the mediocre, intrepid spirits seek victory over those things that seem impossible...it is with an iron will that they embark on the most daring of all endeavors to meet the shadowy future without fear and conquer the unknown."*  
- Ferdinand Magellan, Explorer

Did anyone benefit from Magellan's travels? Of course! He, and his crew, opened up minds. If anything in my life is true about myself, it is the striving to push mediocrity to the back of my life. Does it benefit society? Does an art museum benefit? Sculpture? Great writing such as Shakespeare? Only to a few that can appreciate it directly. But it also makes us all better in the sense that it expands our minds as to what we are capable of. How about the Super Bowl, World Series or any other athletic feat? Do they benefit anyone? Of course, they show what can be done at the highest levels of human achievement.

That is what the Yukon River/Bering Sea Expedition shows; the ability to look at the impossible and conquer this; the ability to see a task that has never been done, analyze the problems and hazards, devise a plan and then execute this plan. There is no room for errors, no room for bad planning, no room for flaws in the execution of this plan. There is simply giving 100% to the mission at hand. Will I achieve perfection? NO. Will things go badly at times? Will storms and tidal shoals, and bears interfere with my plan? You better believe it! My spirit and iron will must conquer these problems. I believe they will. If they do not then I will die.

**What is to be learned from all this?** That the human spirit has the ability to dream the impossible and attain those dreams. That the impossible is not impossible.

**Are you doing this for ego alone?** Ego alone is doing something that is short and sweet, has little skill value, and is done for the sake of the public (to influence how the public views a person). All people have ego. Bank robbers have ego - I can do this and get away with it. That is ego. Actors have egos as do ball players, and the 22 year old kid that is trying to impress the hot 19 year old babe. If we do not feel good about ourselves then we are in trouble.

**Do I do these long expeditions to make myself feel better or to attain a new level of performance in my sport or art?** The James Bay Expedition proved that I am one of the better arctic water sea kayakers. I am the only person, in the world, to have survived kayaking on James Bay. In my mind this proves that I have the ability to manage the risk and discomfort this challenge presents.

**Am I proud of myself?** Oh, yes. I have survived and kayaked where no human has before. (Sounds like Star Trek!)

**Did I do this so others would see me and say "Oh wow what a wonderfully talented athlete"?** No; I could care less.

**Do I want others to look at my achievement and see value in the human spirit and having a can-do-the-impossible attitude?** Yes. I believe that it elevates all of us to a new level. It raises the bar. In the end I do this for myself, to push myself to be better and to show that dreams of the impossible are not just dreams.

**Why not wait until next year?** Simple, I am a 60-year old extreme athlete that has the ability now. I have no clue as to what tomorrow holds. I want to live my life regulated by what I have now and not what I plan to have tomorrow. Anyway, next year is for another long arctic expedition that I have planned in my mind already, another first and another challenge. If I am capable, I will go.

I hope that these answers help in understanding what I am, what I'm doing, and what this expedition is all about.

Magellan is my hero if I have one. He embodies all that we can be as humans: to dream the impossible, plan for it and go straight forward until we win or die. Our skills and our wills must determine the outcome.

*Mingo*