



March 17, 2009

<http://fhmonline.com/Site/blog/Default.aspx?ID=39434&categoryid=2138>



GUY STUFF

Five Tips to Overcome Adversity and Achieve Your Goals

[Bo Parfet](#) is an adventurer, philanthropist and entrepreneur who, after climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in 2003, joined an exclusive club of about 80 people who have conquered the rest of the Seven Summits (the highest mountains on every continent). He chronicles his stories in [Die Trying: One Man's Quest to Conquer the Seven Summits](#). Through out the experience he was forced to face his fears and rely on a common set of tools which he has applied to his everyday living:

Trust High School Physics - Bodies in Motion Stay in Motion

Albert Einstein once wrote, "Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving." At high altitude, temperatures can drop to -40°F, hurricane-force storms pass overhead and breathing is virtually impossible. While your body tempts you to lie

down, forward motion warms your limbs and can propel you to safety. Well, the same is true for most types of adversity. You must keep moving, whether this is to explore a new topic, overcome personal tragedy or to take the first step up a mountain. It can save your life. One of my favorite phrases is the hungry dog pulls harder.

***Practical tip:** Volunteer for a local charity. Changing perspective is a great way to move forward.*

Renaissance Men Survive – Use what you’ve got

Mountaineers are often considered burly and brutish – Certainly, strength and barbarism help us to negotiate crevasses and survive without a shower for months at a time.

However, overcoming adversity, whether hanging from the side of a cliff or in everyday life, requires a polymath not a brute. Renaissance men, armed with meditation techniques, an understanding of the weather, knowledge about the human body and a roll of duct tape, can usually MacGyver their way out of anything. Use all types of information to foster inspiration.

***Practical tip:** Read a section of the Sunday newspaper that you normally never even look at.*

Cut the tags off your shirts - Pack light

Many budding explorers spend weeks before an expedition preparing their pack, and on Argentina’s Aconcagua, early in my career; I packed anything that carried the words wicking, solar, self-adhesive, rechargeable, anti-bacterial or electrolyte. I prepared for every obstacle. Then, two days into the climb, as I stumbled into camp exhausted and several hours behind my more seasoned fellow climbers, I realized that my pack was nearly 40 lbs heavier than theirs; a case of preparation impeding practicality. The emotional baggage of worry and the associated physical baggage hinder our ability to face adversity and accomplish goals. Indeed, when you have to carry the world on your back, less is more.

***Practical Tip:** When faced with adversity, repeat the phrase “let it go.”*

Never share a tent with someone who snores – unless you do, too

Life on a mountain can be very annoying. Long hours and, sometimes, days of waiting for the weather to clear, are followed by intense bursts of grueling physical activity. And since it is normal to be confined to a tent or roped to another person for 20 hours at a time, the old adage, “Familiarity breeds contempt,” is an understatement. Proximity without privacy magnifies every irritating quality in you and your fellow climbers. Achieving a goal usually means overcoming a lot of annoyance. Understand yourself so that you can be aware of your idiosyncrasies. Pick your partners very carefully, preferably so that they compensate for some of your own deficiencies. And cut them the same amount of slack as you would want them to cut you!

Practical tip: Try bikram yoga, extreme temperatures, personal reflection and lots of sweaty grunting people help approximate life's obstacles.

Wash, rinse, repeat

Adversity often comes in two forms. Short-term adversity involves physical danger while long-term adversity can be physical, emotional, financial and/or social. Overcoming long-term adversity requires plenty of tools, whereas the short-term simply requires remembering what's on the back of the shampoo bottle: wash, rinse and repeat. Or, said another way, anticipate, practice, repeat. One of the biggest dangers when climbing is sliding off the face of the mountain. Aware of this, climbers practice a technique called the "self-arrest" which involves flipping over on to their stomachs and jamming their ice axes into the side of the mountain while slipping down a 45-degree face at 30 miles per hour. Mountaineers practice the self-arrest hundreds of times so that, when the inevitable fall occurs, they can respond instantaneously. If forced to choose between instinct and practice, choose practice – at least your hair will be less greasy!

Practical tip: Practice good posture. It's good for your back.

Bo Parfet author of *Die Trying: One Man's Quest to Conquer the Seven Summits* is currently available in bookstores or visit www.boparfet.com.

