



FALL 2017

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magazine

MUSTERING the Courage

EVERYTHING I
LEARNED ABOUT BUSINESS
I Learned on the Way to the Moon

SECRETS TO
Becoming More Creative

INSPIRATION
to the Nth Degree

THAT
One Great Leap

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ON THE DAWN WALL OF EL CAPITAN.

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CELEBRATE! INNOVATION MAGAZINE
IS PUBLISHED BIANNUALLY
BY DES MOINES AREA COMMUNITY
COLLEGE WEST CAMPUS.
FOR ADVERTISING/CONTENT INQUIRIES, CONTACT:
DR. ANTHONY PAUSTIAN
PROVOST, DMACC WEST CAMPUS
5959 GRAND AVENUE, WEST DES MOINES, IOWA 50266
515-633-2439 | ADPAUSTIAN@DMACC.EDU

CONTRIBUTORS:

PUBLISHER: ANTHONY D. PAUSTIAN, PH.D.
CO-EDITOR: BETH BAKER-BRODERSEN
CO-EDITOR: SARA STIBITZ
DESIGNER/PRODUCTION: AMINA MIRAJ ALI

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EDITOR'S NOTE

To the Nth degree. It's a lofty goal, one that requires stamina and perseverance and mastery—and we can all admit it takes time to get there.

But what else does the Nth degree require? Truth-telling about ourselves and a willingness to forgo stories of grandiosity. In other words, humility:

Working in the independent-publishing world as a writer and editor is like working in the wild wild west. While Amazon has edged out the gatekeepers (i.e., the traditional publishing houses) from their posts as the bastions of books—which is a good thing—it's also unleashed a world of creative (and downright uncreative) writing. With the newfound ease of publication, there are so many would-be authors who think that hitting “publish” makes them an authority figure or a master in their arena.

And why not, right? Our newsfeeds make it easy for anyone to come across as an “expert” or a “guru” in a matter of moments. Slap a good picture up with words that sound wise, and you're in business.

It's the easy route. And yes, you have to start somewhere, but instant social media fame provides nothing but vanity metrics and an unearned ego boost. This approach results in a lack of

depth to their knowledge, and a flimsy understanding of their own field that does not stand the test of time.

The truth is that getting to mastery—the Nth degree—takes time, great effort, and an ability to see yourself where you are, right now, in the grand scheme of things, and then to keep working no matter where you judge yourself to be.

In this edition of stories you will read in this edition of *ciWeek Magazine*, you'll notice a common thread: not one of these writers ever took the attitude of “I'm too good for this,” or “I don't need to put in the work because I'm already the best.” Every one of them had to overcome major setbacks to become masters at what they do. You'll read about how Kaila Mullady overcame physical injury to become one of the world's best beatrhythming champions. You'll read how Dan Gable overcame great family tragedy and became an Olympian. You'll read about how Kevin

Jorgeson overcame both injury and ego to achieve one of the world's greatest climbing feats. And in the second installment of Colonel Al Worden and Bill Penczak's two-part series, you'll read how lessons learned from space travel helped Colonel Worden overcome some of the most common problems in business, innovation, and managing people.

Whatever it is you're reaching for, keep reaching. But remember, there are no shortcuts to the Nth degree.



SARA STIBITZ CO-EDITOR
SRSTIBITZ@GMAIL.COM.

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AL WORDEN'S COMMAND MODULE ENDEAVOUR. USED WITH PERMISSION.



BY COLONEL AL WORDEN
WITH BILL PENCZAK

PART 2:

EVERYTHING I LEARNED ABOUT BUSINESS,

I Learned on the Way to the Moon

In the conclusion of this two-part series, Colonel Al Worden Bill Penczak continue their exploration of lessons learned in space flight and in business. See the Spring 2017 edition of ciMagazine for Part 1.

Risk Is Omnipresent, So Plan and Plan More.

Before the Challenger and Columbia accidents occurred, another tragedy on Pad 34 at Cape Kennedy almost derailed President Kennedy's challenge to put a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s. The fire in the capsule, later named Apollo 1, took the lives of Roger Chaffee, Gus Grissom, and Ed White, who were to fly the very first Apollo spacecraft into Earth's orbit. The ensuing investigations by NASA and the U.S. Senate robbed the program of nearly two years before putting a man on the moon.

The Senate report^[1] cited several contributing factors:

- Failure to identify testing as hazardous
- Spacecraft hatch design
- Ground safety procedures
- Operational test procedures
- Communications
- Combustible materials control
- Engineering, workmanship, and quality control deficiencies

When I re-read the Senate report 50 years later, I was struck by the fact that, except for the technical failures of the hatch and control of the combustibles, those same deficiencies could be found in any business today. More importantly, after a short circuit started a fire, no one perceived the danger until it was too late.

As I write the first draft of this article in late October 2016, the Samsung Note 7 mobile phone debacle is in the news. No doubt between now and the time this is published, there will be other accidents that could and should have been prevented. Risk isn't just on the launch pads at NASA, it is rampant in the workspaces and tools of management worldwide. A colleague recently shared a quote by Mark Twain:



THE APOLLO 1 CREW OF GUS GRISSOM, ED WHITE AND ROGER CHAFFEE. USED WITH PERMISSION.

It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble.

It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.

Twain's words capture the notion of risk, and the key to mitigating at least some of it.

In complex organizations, there's an inherent proclivity toward siloed thinking and behavior, the result of size and complexity. Some of it is territorial or political, or due to differences in timeline priorities. Some of it is plain stupidity. You may recognize the saying, "The larger the organization, the dumber it gets."

In today's hyper-competitive world, speed to market often wins over speed to smart. But in the best organizations, these goals are not mutually exclusive. Despite setbacks like the Apollo 1 fire, NASA was able to achieve a remarkable feat with an employee and contractor workforce of as many as 400,000 individuals.

Risk Management Requires Business Management

In 2002, large U.S. public companies faced a new regulatory mandate, Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX), named for the two Senators who sponsored the bill in the aftermath of the Enron scandal. These regulations were enacted to reduce systemic corporate fraud, and called for stricter internal controls over financial data, reporting, independence, IT security, and high-level processes and procedures. Ten years hence, two trends emerged. Public companies shifted their SOX reviews from a compliance mandate to a performance enhancement imperative. Savvy private companies^[2] use the same methodologies to manage risk and performance improvement, as a result of discovering that how a company does things matters, and that protecting against bad decisions is as important as protecting against bad actors.

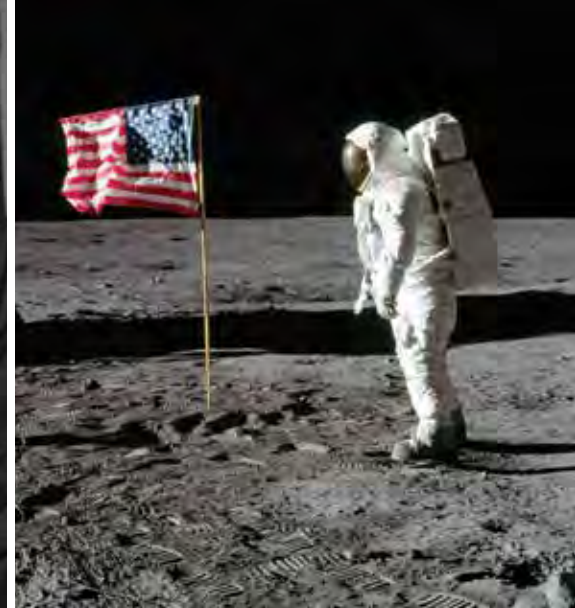
Poor business decisions can take at least two forms: not proactively protecting the organization from the wrong things occurring (reactive), or the more strategic approach of ensuring the right things happen (proactive)—greater market share, improved margins, or less churn of customers and employees. The latter ties back to the Twain quote about what we "know for sure." Nothing is for sure except death and gravity. Fortunately, I only have personal experience with one of these.

Regardless of whether yours is an enterprise with thousands of employees, or a startup of one or two people, the most important risk management tool is *communication*. It's about asking the right questions. It means assuming nothing. (SEE THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ARTICLE IN THE RESOURCES SECTION AT THE END OF THE ARTICLE.)

[1] http://history.nasa.gov/as204_senate_956.pdf, [2] aabri.com/OC2013Manuscripts/OC13031.pdf



JACK GARMAN (ON THE RIGHT), THE MAN WHO SAVED APOLLO 11. USED WITH PERMISSION.



BUZZ ALDRIN ON THE MOON DURING APOLLO 11. USED WITH PERMISSION.

An environment in which people are comfortable enough to question current thinking allows them to ask the revealing, and often exciting, “what if” questions. Had there been any discussion of the danger of the combustibles in the spacecraft and the design of the hatch, the tragedy could have been avoided. If communication were better between those in the spacecraft, the control room, the operations building, and the blockhouse on Apollo 1, the outcome might have been different. In today’s business world, better opportunity exists not only to reduce the risk of things going wrong, but to increase the chance of things going right.

The Next Big Idea Won’t Come from Where You Expect

After a journey of 250,000 miles, the Apollo 11 Lunar Module, Eagle, was 3,000 feet from achieving the first half of President Kennedy’s bold challenge. Seconds before touchdown, an alarm sounded and paralyzed nearly everyone at Mission Control. The 1202 alarm indicated a computer system overload, which allowed the guidance officer, Steve Bales, only seconds to decide to

Today’s business lore would have it that new ideas are hatched only in garages or at kitchen tables...

about a mission nearly 10 years in the making. Bales quickly consulted the software support engineer, who calmly responded that as long as the alarm didn’t occur again, the alert was fine. The mission proceeded, with less than a minute of fuel remaining for descent to the moon’s surface.

That engineer, Jack Garman, saved the mission. In 1969, they called Jack a hero. Today we’d call him a millennial.

[Note: Watch the landing and hear the 1201 and 1202 error discussions at [youtube.com/watch?v=KBz5KXCJ88Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBz5KXCJ88Q).]

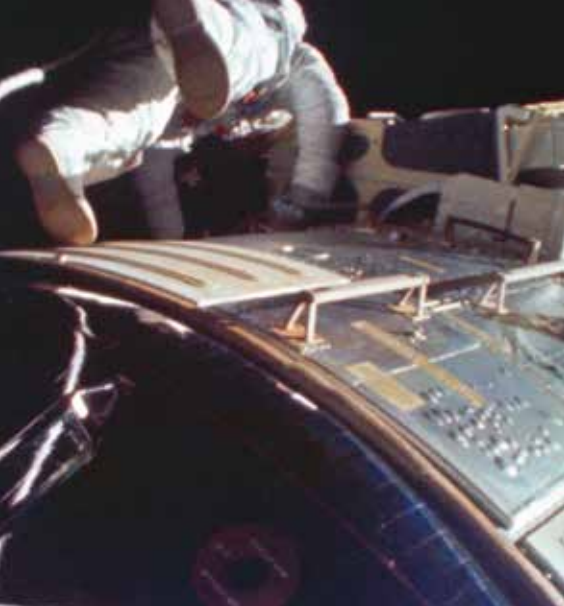
Jack Garman, who at the time was a 25-year old engineer working for NASA, is credited with saving the Apollo 11 mission. He’s shown here with Chris Craft, receiving an accommodation.

Incremental Innovation Vs. Radical Innovation

Today’s business lore would have it that new ideas are hatched only in garages or at kitchen tables...due to the ease and connectivity of the Internet. It has become easy to forget that incremental (inside the box) innovation happens every day in large corporations. In 2015, the most U.S. patents weren’t issued to Google or Facebook, but an “old line” company named IBM^[3]—the patent record holder for 23 years. IBM, Samsung, and Canon (number two and three in patents) have formal processes for developing new ideas, diligence for proof of concept, and monetization to assure their success. Radical innovation (outside the box) creates game changers that revolutionize the heretofore mundane: airline travel (Travelocity), music consumption (Spotify), or classified advertising (Craigslist).

We hear about the radical innovations, because we interact with them as consumers, as opposed to the incremental innovations occurring in Samsung labs. We are romanced by the notion of the upstart (the 16-year-old in her parents’ basement inventing something and getting silly rich).

[3] fortune.com/2016/01/13/patents-2015/



AL WORDEN'S FIRST-EVER DEEP SPACE WALK. USED WITH PERMISSION.

When I was growing up, we wanted to become professional baseball players or musicians. Today's youth want to be Internet billionaires.

But most businesses fall in the great middle between IBM—with their billions in R&D budgets—and that kid in the basement with a dream. The elements they share, however, are the need for innovation, and the ability to tap into their human capital to discover it. The need for innovation needs no discussion. That's the foundation of capitalism.

Fostering an environment in which new ideas can germinate and grow is more difficult, and the challenge is for management to find the next big idea. Somewhere entangled in that quest is the role of millennials and others, who if properly challenged or listened to could supply the genesis of the next breakthrough idea.

I grew up in the Great Depression and learned to be frugal and conservative. I haven't worked with millennials, but my baby boomer, upper management sons-in-law tell me millennials have different work habits than their boomer bosses. Beneath the desire for work-life balance and a seemingly casual demeanor can lie passion for causes

they believe in, a greater sense of social and corporate equality, and an innate desire to contribute to something bigger than themselves.

Therein lies the opportunity for millennials to shine, and for management to tap into a dynamic resource. The challenge is understanding their motivations and leading them in the right way. That entails listening without bias or criticism and having the collective courage to try something new, even if it exceeds our comfort zones.

Had Apollo 11 guidance officer Steve Bales stopped to question 24-year-old Jack Garman, or let his ego intercede, I might not be writing this article today. Steve trusted his people, he listened, and he saved the mission.

Technology is the enabler—more so today

There are 10 times as many lines of code in the 2016 Ford F-150 than in the Apollo 11 LM,^[4] and 82 times more in the Android operating system. At the time, the Apollo mission was a technological marvel. Today, the technology seems archaic. But our first generation VR viewers today will likely seem quaint in 2025.

Although the Russian Sputnik satellite was the first launched into space, and cosmonaut Gagarin was the first man in space, American technology provided the ultimate advantage in the moon race. The development of silicon chips in California allowed for solid-state devices that could withstand the rigors of space. Computers built with solid-state technology incorporated 64K memory, significant at the time.

Improved communications technology, the genesis of today's ubiquitous smartphones, made a 1,500,000-mile journey possible. And development of materials such as titanium lessened the weight of the rocket boosters, reducing



THE CREW OF APOLLO 15 (DAVE SCOTT, AL WORDEN AND JIM IRWIN). USED WITH PERMISSION.

the amount of thrust required to lift a 6.2-million-pound machine, as tall as a 36-story building, from a launch pad into space. As we've heard for the past 50 years, the technologies that enabled the Apollo and space shuttle missions have found their way into businesses and our homes decades later.^[5]

The proliferation of technology for commerce, manufacturing, and communications today is nothing short of staggering. Moore's Law, which states the number of transistors per square inch on integrated circuits will double every year, recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, even though pundits doubted the trend could continue. It will, because it has to.

New or lower cost technologies have leveled the playing field, making it easier for smaller companies to be on more equal footing with larger ones. Virtually any company can work from the cloud (I'm writing this in Google Docs and haven't had to hit "save" yet) without the need for servers and people to maintain or protect them from hackers.

We are morphing to the Internet of Things, where our cars, homes, offices, and friendships can all be linked

[4] itworld.com/article/2725085/big-data/curiosity-about-lines-of-code.html; eidigital.eu/news-events/blog/article/guess-what-requires-150-million-lines-of-code/. [5] spinoff.nasa.gov/Spinoff2008/tech_benefits.html



AL WORDEN SPEAKING DURING ciWEEK 8. USED WITH PERMISSION.

Seventy-five percent of middle market companies using AMT saw significant or positive impact on margin. And these were middle market companies, with revenues between \$10 million and \$1 billion. (See the Resources section for a link to the full report.)

We're venturing into space again, through Blue Origin and SpaceX. I'm excited that we're exploring space again but can't help but observe that Jeff Bezos (Blue Origin) and Elon Musk (SpaceX) are investing billions earned from their creative use of technologies rooted in the Apollo program to fund a return to space. Maybe we've come full circle.

Final Thoughts— The Three Cs

I've had the unique blessing to be an astronaut and a businessman and to live long enough to reflect on both. My conclusion is that the success of Apollo and the success of a business today comes down to the three Cs:

Courage. It took courage for JFK to make a gallant challenge to the country, particularly during a difficult economic period. Jack Garman spoke courageously and saved the Apollo 11 mission. It requires the same fortitude to toe the corporate line or to invest in new technology that might affect short-term profit in the hopes of longer-term growth and profit.

Culture. NASA's culture was so strong that a janitor felt a part of landing a man on the moon. We overcame technical, political, and timing challenges because we were on a mission. And management, technicians, engineers, contractors, and the guys in the space suits all knew we were creating something bigger than ourselves. Your corporate culture defines acceptable behavior and expectations of the myriad of personalities—big and small—in your organization. But more

and managed. We are on the cusp of practical applications of artificial intelligence (AI). IBM built Watson, a sophisticated AI computer, that won \$1,000,000 on *Jeopardy* playing against really smart humans. In October 2016, Salesforce.com, the cloud-based consumer relationship management (CRM) provider that's rapidly expanding into other solutions, unveiled Einstein, an AI application that provides predictive modeling on customer databases. While Einstein isn't fully proven, or part of the base cost of a Salesforce.com subscription, anyone can access all the functionality of a Salesforce.com's CRM system for about \$100 per month, leveling the playing field.

Data demonstrates that technology can have a direct, positive impact on company performance. The National Center for the Middle Market published a white paper on the impact of advanced manufacturing technology (AMT) on middle market company revenue, margin, and other KPIs. The companies that used AMT practices such as automation, control systems, computer technology or robotics, had 27 percent higher revenue growth than their peers who weren't using AMT.^[6]

Col. Al Worden was Command Module Pilot of Apollo 15 and retains the record for the deepest space EVA, for which *The Guinness Book of World's Records* gave him the moniker,

"The world's most isolated man." After retiring from NASA in 1975, Worden became President of Maris Worden Aerospace, Inc., and later served as Vice President of BF Goodrich Aerospace. He was Chairman of the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation until 2011 and since then has been speaking and writing about business and the space program. In 2011, Worden's memoir *Falling To Earth* made the top 12 of *The LA Times* Bestseller list.



Bill Penczak was a marketing consultant for the first 20 years of his career, advising national and regional consumer, retail, and B2B brands such as Dell, AT&T, and Motorola. Since 2005, he has held global and national marketing and sales leadership positions in professional services firms. They are collaborating on a book on this same topic to be published by Smithsonian Books in 2018.

Constant communication is the key to getting the most from people, particularly millennials, who want to know the big picture and what's in it for them. Communication has a way of reducing risk in companies.

Resources

COMMUNICATIONS

The Silent Killer of Big Companies, Harvard Business Review; A good article about the value of communications in large organizations hbr.org/2012/10/the-silent-killer-of-big-companies

CORPORATE SPIN AND POOR COMMUNICATIONS

marketplace.org/2012/01/17/business/best-corporate-spin-year

THE NEXT BIG IDEA AND MILLENNIALS

There's a new book called *Competing Against Luck: The Story of Innovation and Consumer Choice* by Harvard Professor Clayton Christensen that asks the question, "What job did you hire that product (person) to do?" Here's a link to a summary.

AMT AND MIDDLE MARKET MANUFACTURERS

A fairly comprehensive study among manufacturing companies with revenues between \$10 million and \$1 billion, citing the impact of Advanced Manufacturing Techniques on several Key Performance Indicators.

middlemarketcenter.org/Media/Documents/advanced-manufacturing-techniques-among-us-middle-market-manufacturers_advanced_manufacturing_report.pdf

[6] middlemarketcenter.org/Media/Documents/advanced-manufacturing-techniques-among-us-middle-market-manufacturers_advanced_manufacturing_report.pdf

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BY ANTHONY PAUSTIAN, PH.D.

SECRETS TO *Becoming More Creative*

Decades ago, my dad—always the jokester—would tell a favorite joke, in multiple parts. The genius of his approach was in how it was told—as two separate jokes, delivered back-to-back, each totally dependent upon the other. No one realized the connection until the end (often after it was revealed), which is what always made it funny.

Today, when I speak about creativity, I frequently begin the presentation by telling a version of the first part of Dad's joke:

A little girl is skipping down the street when she comes upon three colored bricks lying on the road: one red, one yellow, and one blue. She pauses, reaches down for the red one, thinks for a moment, and heaves it into the air. The brick hits the ground hard and breaks into pieces. After laughing a bit, she reaches down for the yellow one and heaves it higher into the air. The brick hits the ground with a greater force and shatters. Laughing almost hysterically, she reaches down, grabs the blue one, and throws it even higher into the air. It never comes back down.

What's the secret to creativity? It has less to do with ability and everything to do with focus.

The result is always the same. No laughter. Blank stares. Crickets.

Following the brief, awkward silence, even though I know it really wasn't funny at all, I tell the audience the joke was actually very funny—they just didn't get it and lack imagination.

To quickly lighten the mood, I then follow that joke with one that is actually funny, speak for a bit about imagination, and then move on to the second part of the original joke.

We're at the state fair, and a young man is giving hot air balloon rides. An older woman, holding a parrot, walks up and climbs into the balloon's basket (I then ask the audience: What do parrots do? The typical response is "talk.") A minute later, an older gentleman with a pocketful of cigars also climbs in (I again ask: What do cigars do? The typical response is "stink.")

The balloon lifts off of the ground. The older man lights up a stogie. The parrot begins to loudly talk and squawk. The older man complains about the noise. The woman complains about the cigar smoke. Words are spoken. Yelling and arguing ensue. It finally reaches a point where the balloon operator says, "Enough! Unless you both want to be thrown out of the balloon, toss that bird and those cigars immediately." The passengers begrudgingly comply. After a few seconds, the woman says, "Look! There's my parrot. But what's in its mouth?" (I now look at the audience with my hands extended and they always say, "Cigar," and then I say "A blue brick.")

Creativity is nothing more than making new connections between things that have yet to be connected. When I say this, people usually think I mean connecting things that are very different, such as Sam Colt connecting the design of the ship's wheel of a seafaring vessel to his design of the revolver, or applying old ideas to help solve new problems. A good example of the latter is when Fred Smith connected the Federal Reserve check-clearing system, originally designed in the early 1900s, to the modern need for expedited, efficient shipping logistics that would ultimately become FedEx. However, and more typically, creativity is simply connecting thoughts or ideas that occur only moments apart (think blue brick).

In the past, this wasn't as big a problem because life moved more slowly, and recalling information wasn't as difficult because we had less information to contend with. Yet, with the daily deluge of information bombarding our brains through app notifications, tweets, text messages, and the like, combined with the enormous pile of minutia that seems to overtake our lives, it's easy to see how the connection between two thoughts separated by only a few minutes can get lost.



Dr. Anthony Paustian is the Provost for Des Moines Area Community College in West Des Moines and the author of *Imagine!*, *Beware the Purple People Eaters*, and *A Quarter Million Steps*.

www.dmacc.edu/west

www.QuarterMillionSteps.com

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What's the secret to creativity? It has less to do with ability and everything to do with focus:

1. Slow down and take your time.
2. Disconnect from technology when you want to maintain your level of attention to a problem or issue. Those little red dot indicators on your smartphone apps trigger a dopamine release that makes you feel good, yet it's highly addictive and kills creative thinking.
3. Actively listen (and not just "hear") by mentally repeating what enters your ears to improve memory retention.
4. Write down your thoughts and ideas for easy reference later (which has also been shown to yield better results by slowing down the thought process).

Although these ideas aren't new, they are proven to enhance creativity. Sometimes, in order to think differently, make a new connection, or create that killer idea, it's as simple as remembering the blue brick.



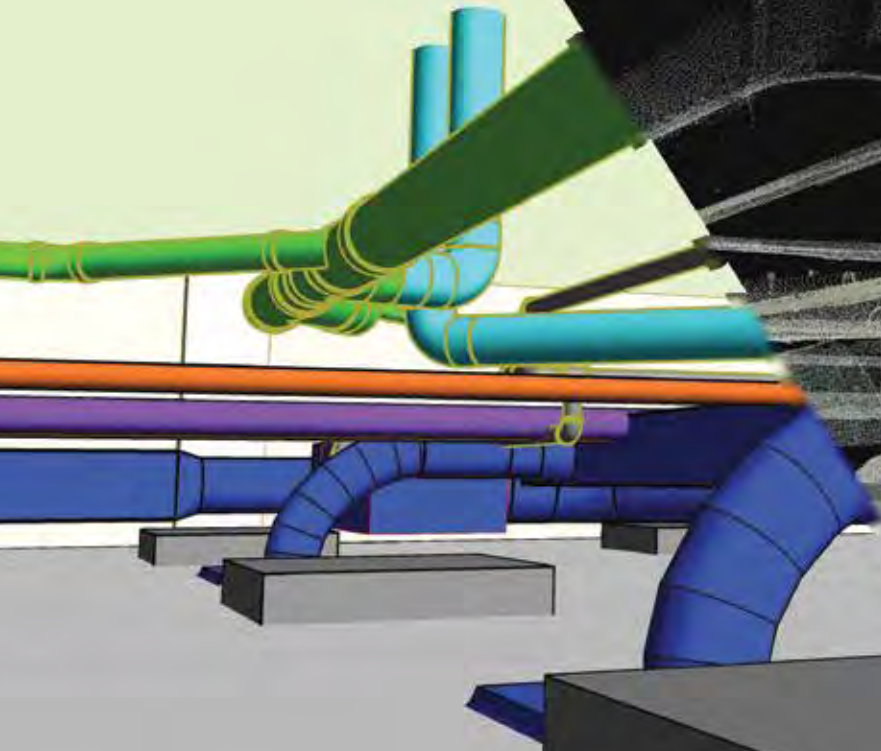
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DAN GABLE IN "COACHING" MODE. USED WITH PERMISSION.



BY DAN GABLE

INSPIRATION

to the Nth Degree

Inspiration and accomplishments, along with good people, are what it takes to get to the Nth degree. I am extremely fortunate to have people who took good care of me in Waterloo, Iowa, and guided me well in the early years of my life.



DAN GABLE AND BOB SIDDENS: TWO GUYS WHO HAVE PROMOTED THE SPORT OF WRESTLING THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES. USED WITH PERMISSION.



DAN GABLE AND HIS SISTER DIANE BEFORE HER DEATH IN 1964. (CREDIT—GABLE FAMILY). USED WITH PERMISSION.



TO EACH THEIR OWN: GARY KUNDELMEIER—CALM, COOL, AND COLLECTED—AND DAN GABLE MAKING HIS POINT. (CREDIT—UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ATHLETICS). USED WITH PERMISSION.

When I was young, sports were my thing, but academics were not on my radar until the eighth grade. That's when I attended a class where I really bonded with the teacher. He was the wrestling coach, and I finally paid attention and strived for good performance. That class changed my life for the better, and I became a better student as well. Without that class and proper respect for my teachers, I would have gone a different route in life. Because of these influences, the Nth degree was forming—discipline in more disciplines—and good things were more likely to happen as a result.

High school followed junior high, and my academics were good. Because of my small size, I only focused on wrestling. Having a good home life, plus my experiences at the YMCA when I was a young kid, and an inspiring Algebra teacher and wrestling coach, Coach Martin Lundvall, allowed me to thrive.

The transition into high school with Bob Siddens as the wrestling coach and guidance counselor was too good to be true. Siddens was the top wrestling coach in the state. I had been lucky, but now I was also creating my own luck because of the leadership skills I had learned.

I had a good home life, and when I was away, I was taken care of. I didn't know

it, but I was getting my education and preparing for my profession at the highest levels. If only everyone had this opportunity, just how far ahead would we be?

The success continued, not without setbacks, but the academics were good and the wrestling was great with all victories for me and the entire team. I

*With the right mentors,
our performance in life
has a much greater chance
of excelling.*

went undefeated in all three high school seasons, and the team won state twice and took second once. However, that didn't spare me from setbacks were off the mat; my sister Diane was killed in 1964. Diane had fought for her life resisting the sexual attacks of her killer. In fact, she gave up her life instead of giving in.

Shortly after her death, we moved back into the house where Diane was murdered, which was difficult. My parents engaged in a lot of late night arguments that involved

alcohol and blame. I would lie in bed and listen to the pain they were going through. Now, with kids and grandkids of my own, I understand how they felt.

There were many nights of this before my mother brought me into their argument. I joined the chaos by telling my parents that I was going to change bedrooms and live in Diane's room to help make this house a home again. Her room had been sealed off from the rest of the house, and her door shut for almost a month since we moved back. That night I opened her bedroom door and slept in the room (or at least my parents thought so) and never moved out. Even during college, and until my mother passed on years later, my wife Kathy, and my girls, Jenni, Annie, Molly, and Mackie, all slept in Diane's bedroom on visits to the house. Moving into her bedroom was the turning point (the Nth degree) that saved my family. New motivation was now in place to help the future. Because of our positive family outlook and the support of others, we moved forward.

College came next, and wrestling was the primary focus—a lifetime focus that sent me to Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. Now I had even more great mentors, like national championship



GOOD MENTORING LEADS TO MORE OF THE SAME. DAN GABLE WON THE 1972 OLYMPIC GOLD—AND TOM BRANDS, THE 1996 OLYMPIC GOLD. USED WITH PERMISSION.

head coach Harold Nichols, national champion wrestler assistant Les Anderson, and my wrestling idol, twice-national champion Tom Peckham, who was training for the Olympics.

These three were the best in wrestling. Even while away during summer training camps and kids' clinics, I'd get attention from wrestling's best, like Oklahoma State coach Myron Roderick and University of Oklahoma coach Tommy Evans. Other athletes like Rich Sanders, Bobby Douglas, and Wayne Walls helped bring me along to the Nth Degree. Even my training partners at Iowa State, including future Olympic gold medalists Ben and John Peterson, were being molded into Nth degree competitors for the future.

Many others helped me not just on the mat, but in the classroom. Although I was a hundred miles away, I heard from the folks at home almost daily through the mail. These little touches helped me as I was a homebody.

I went seven years without a scholastic wrestling loss, but that all changed in my last college match. I had 181 consecutive wins with one to go, and I lost. I could have fallen apart, but I didn't, thanks to all the mentors I've had through the years.

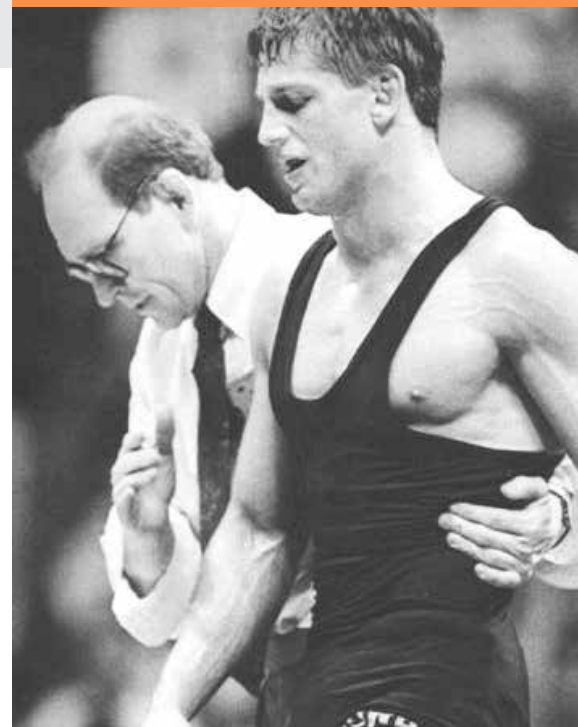
It wasn't simple. I experienced a lot of pain and discipline, and I learned to work smarter. I got back on track at an even higher rate of improvement and understanding.

I finished my wrestling career well, for once again my mentors were great at the World and Olympic levels. Doug Blubaugh, 1960 Rome Olympic Champion, coached the 1971 Worlds in Sofia, Bulgaria. The 1972 Munich Games were coached by Bill Farrell, coach of the New York Athletic Club. Both men took me in and supplied the knowledge I needed. I won Gold at both the Worlds and the Olympics.

After the Olympics, it was time to move on and create my own family, and it was time to create champions on the mat as a coach—champions for life on and off the mat. Much the same continued to happen to help move me forward. My list of accomplishments grew even longer than they were as a kid in individual competitions.

With the right mentors, our performance in life has a much greater chance of excelling. A team effort is the best way, and in my case, it continued on with my wife, Kathy.

A native Iowan, Gable achieved an unprecedented wrestling career, including a prep and collegiate collective record of 182-1 and a 1972 Olympic gold medal among many other national and world wins. Gable isn't just a champion athlete himself. As a successful coach, he has personally inspired hundreds of the athletes to achieve their best. As head wrestling coach at the University of Iowa, he led his team to 15 NCAA team titles. Gable also served as the Olympic head coach three times and was a six-time World Team head coach. Gable made the list of ESPN's Top 10 Coaches of All Time.



AFTER TOM RYAN LED MOST OF THE 1991 NCAA MATCH UNTIL THE LAST FEW SECONDS, HE AND DAN GABLE LEFT THE ARENA. USED WITH PERMISSION.

The mentoring responsibilities never end, they just happen in different ways at different times in life.

Finally, being mentored by good leaders at every stage of life—childhood, education, adulthood—helps develop future leaders. Over time, the masses will be touched and the Nth degree will be possible for more people.



JORDAN CREEK TOWN CENTER

SCHEELS DILLARD'S YOUNKERS APPLE COACH

VERA BRADLEY FLEMING'S PRIME STEAKHOUSE & WINE BAR

J.CREW THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY FRANCESCA'S SEPHORA



KAILA MULLADY PREPARING TO BUST A BEAT. USED WITH PERMISSION.



BY KAILA MULLADY

THAT

One Great Leap

I've always heard in order to succeed you must "take a leap of faith." I may have taken that a little too literally. As I lay in the sand looking up over the cliff I had just leapt from, unable to move, I realized this is what my mother has always warned me about.



KAILA MULLADY AND 2016 AMERICAN BEATBOX CHAMPION, MARK MARTIN, PERFORM AS THEIR GROUP "LIGHTSHIP" USED WITH PERMISSION.

At the time, after a week in the hospital, a broken back, and no way to make money for likely a year, I thought I had made the biggest mistake of my life. Little did I know this would be the door I was looking for, opening to opportunities I always wanted, even though in true Kaila fashion, I kicked the door down instead of knocking.

I had a brief career studying education in college, but I dropped out to pursue performing and focus on improv theater. I wanted to act. I wanted to sing. I wanted to do it all! Now lying in bed with a broken back, I worried I might not have made the right choice. Acting with a back brace was a daunting task. Unless I was playing the part of a robot, I needed another way.

I've beatboxed since I was 9 years old. I picked it up around the same time I started playing guitar. A year before my accident, through fate I had met a

national beatbox champion who taught me new techniques and introduced me to the community, including my mentor, Terry Lewis.

After watching me perform (while wearing my back brace), Terry invited me into the city to talk. Later he told me that was the reason he wanted to work with me. He had seen people bow out of a show because of a cold, but I traveled two hours from Long Island with a broken back. Terry then introduced me to the art of beatrhyming—the incorporation of beatboxing, singing, and rapping at the same time. It was a no-brainer. If I could talk and beatbox, I could incorporate beatboxing with theater. The possibilities were endless, and it seemed like a way to combine my two passions. What did I have to lose?

Surrounding yourself with like-minded individuals is crucial to becoming successful. The people Terry introduced

me to then shaped me into the artist I am today. When my family was disappointed by my decision to drop out of college, having people around me who faced the same struggles kept me motivated. Experienced musicians gave me advice that allowed me to be a full-time musician in New York City. They shared their early mistakes and offered their guidance. Without their support, I might not be where I am today.

I truly believe success leaves clues. Find the best people in your field, read books, and ask questions. When you are humble enough to admit what you do not know, you will find people who will gladly teach you.

I never thought jumping off a cliff in Long Island would land me on a street corner in New York City. But firmly planted I stood, facing the Astor Place Cube, working day after day with Terry on this new craft.

Broke at the time, I needed enough money to get myself home to Long Island and back to the city the next day, and then do it all over again. Looking off a stage, lights blinding, energy circumnavigating thousands of faces, is not hard. What is hard? One angry New Yorker on a hot day in July chasing me away from a building, or a man on the street who took my hard-earned cash before running full speed in the opposite direction. Ladies and gentleman, start your engines. Looks like today the office has become a race track as well.

Performing in front of five thousand people who have paid to have a good time is like shooting fish in a barrel. They want to be there. They are ready to be amazed and dazzled. Out on the fast-paced streets of New York City, for even one person to stop for one minute means you are doing something right. Plus, with the added pressure of making money from what I was doing, I had to quickly learn what worked and what didn't. I take that dedication into all areas of my career now. No matter the obstacles, I come back to it until I achieve what I want.

There are very few women in the beatbox community. The majority of countries around the world segregate women and men during competitions. This doesn't allow women to show they are just as good and reinforces a stigma against women. I knew that music and beatboxing aren't gender-specific and continue to battle to end that stereotype. In my first battle, I beat the first American beatbox champion, a win that made me the first woman in America to beat a man in a national competition.

I was flying high after that victory. I beat him fair and square, anyone could see that. Unfortunately, moments after winning I heard, "You only won because you are a woman," which could have taken the wind right out of my sails. I knew it wasn't



"RED," 2017. USED WITH PERMISSION.

true though, so I did not let that stop me. It only made me train harder so no one could use my gender against me.

Since that first battle, I have won eight titles. I am the 2015 World Beatbox Champion, three-time Beatrhyme Champion, three-time Loop Station Champion, and the 2014 Vice Beatbox Champion. I still hear the same ignorant comments, but actions speak louder than words. Every battle I win supplies

evidence that women and men do not need to be segregated. I hope one day when a woman beats a man, her gender will not be used against her.

If you never take the risk to put yourself out there, you never know what you will find. Devote time to something you are passionate about and work hard if you want to be successful. This is true with a practice, an idea, an invention, or a relationship. You have to work out the



KAILA MULLADY COMPETING AT THE GRAND BEATBOX BATTLE IN SWITZERLAND 2016. USED WITH PERMISSION.

kinks no matter what you choose. Every time you see a crack, fill it in until it is smooth. The more you fill, the smoother and stronger it becomes.

With this in mind, slowly but surely my confidence grew. I was able to see what worked, and the message I wanted to convey. When I began, Terry was already an established musician. We would perform when I still could not string together words or sing a note. I followed the “fake it till you make it” rule.

I wasn't sure what I was doing, but when I hit that stage, no one knew otherwise. More gigs came in, and I found my way back to improv through beatboxing. I joined “North Coast,” New York's premier hip hop improv team. I was able to do the things I loved: theater and beatboxing. You do not have to choose when it comes to your passions. If possible, find a way to incorporate them all.

My good friend Ben Mirin is a perfect example of this. Ben's two passions in life are beatboxing and bird-watching. For a long time, Ben was torn. With a lot of imagination and motivation to create his ideal life, he invented a whole new career for himself as a wildlife DJ.

He creates beats from animal noises around the world and records them to promote environmentalism. Now an employee of *National Geographic*, he has had a very successful children's show and was able to travel to Madagascar collecting lemur and bird samples to incorporate into his songs. If Ben had taken the easy route and picked just one of his passions, he would never be making the impact he is today. Ben constantly inspires me to find solutions that will help bring my passions together, and to authentically share my vision to help others find the power of their voice.

Just because I dropped out of college does not mean I won't teach others. It is what I always wanted, but I did not like the way I was being taught to work with children. I had to be realistic. Every choice you make has an end you should imagine before you make it. If I had stayed in school, I would have started substituting by the time I was 21, paying off my loans with no time to perform.

The only thing I wanted to do was perform, so that wasn't an option. I also had to be honest with myself. I didn't feel passionate about the cause I was about to embark on. I listened to my heart. I didn't want to teach how to solve for X, how to sing a note, or what happened in 1942. I wanted to open people up, help them feel comfortable enough to be expressive, and find power in their voice. Through beatboxing, I became an artist who also teaches others. I first worked with the hip-hop book club, an organization started by

artists to promote reading and writing to youth in libraries all around New York City through beathyming.

The first thing we did was read Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" the way it was intended, only to be met with drowsy eyes. Once we added beatboxing, rapping, and singing, "The Raven" became their favorite song. I've watched kids too afraid to speak up in class recite their own work through a microphone in a room full of people. Kids have a natural ability to learn; you just have to make it fun.

My favorite challenge so far has been working with Lavelle School for the Blind, using beathyming as a music and speech therapy tool. I have watched children who are more or less mute pipe up to sing just one note. Music brings these children out of their shells. This work shows me how much of an impact beatboxing can have on others.

Through my work at Lavelle, I started a partnership with New York University. They entered the class at Lavelle with us one morning and witnessed one of the biggest breakthroughs we had with a student.

One student in particular was an extremely gifted beatboxer. He could definitely hold his own in any cypher he could enter. His communication was a different story. It was very hard to understand him. He lacked the necessary articulation to speak clearly, but when he beatboxed it was strong and clean.

While teaching him beathyming, I asked if he could say the word "chicken" for the whole class. It was barely understood. Then we broke down the word. First he beatboxed just the "Ch" sound. It was as strong as ever. Next we did the "k" sound, which is what beatboxers use for a snare. It was so loud it almost broke the speaker. Last, he made a beat with the sound "en." Each sound was produced perfectly,

leaving even me impressed. I then asked if he could say "chicken."

Again, there was no articulation in his pronunciation. I asked him if he noticed a difference between the way he beatboxed and the way he spoke. He knew his beatboxing was loud and clear while his speech wasn't. I posed a question, "What if when you spoke, you thought about each letter like it was a beatboxing sound?" His eyes grew wide, "I get it!" He was smiling ear-to-ear. For the rest of the school year, he would beathyme in class.

Performing in front of five thousand people who have paid to have a good time is like shooting fish in a barrel.

My partner and I like to say our beatboxing and speech therapy class is like sneaking vegetables into a fruit smoothie. The students are having so much fun, they never think they're working on their speech goals. We've since started our own speech therapy and beatboxing practice, offering free classes for three months in New York City. We are also in the process of gathering data to support our claim that beatboxing is an extremely beneficial tool for speech therapy.

My team designs games to make communication and speech development fun, because we strongly believe that for children to be successful, they must develop a love for learning. This mindset will be with them their entire lives and help them in many ways outside of expression and communication. With imagination and hard work, you can make any activity fun for a child. You can spark the love of

Kaila Mullady is a New York based performer and the 2015 World Beatbox Champion, the 2014 America Vice Beatbox Champion, 3x Loop Station Champion and 3x, reigning Beathyme Champion. Mullady performs throughout the world infusing beatboxing, singing, rapping, poetry and theater to push the boundaries of creativity and show just what the human instrument is capable of.

Mullady has been a teaching artist for 5 years: leading workshops all over the world promoting reading, writing and finding one's own soul music. Her work using beatboxing as a tool for speech therapy created a partnership with New York University, where a class based on her curriculum was designed specifically to build tools in the classroom. Giving back to communities and volunteering are big part of Kaila's creative process.

learning, and the love of growing and developing as a better person. We hope beatboxing can help men, women, and children of all ages find the confidence of their voices and use it to share their experiences with the world.

Before I started my career, I thought I wasn't going to be able to do it all. How could I find time to teach, act, and play music? Where would I even start? It takes one step, that's all. Through beatboxing, I was able to create a network that reached beyond beatboxing. I found my way into theater, incorporating singing and guitar into my work while using my voice to enact social change and awareness. I am lucky to say that because of that one step, that one corner looking out onto a thousand unknown faces, I found my way. I have been across the world teaching and performing. It takes a lot of work—there are only so many hours in a day—but if you manage your time and are mindful of keeping a strict schedule, everything you want can come to fruition.

I guess it is true when they say, "Those who don't jump will never fly." That one great leap led me to soar farther than I ever thought imaginable. So here is my question to you: where will one great leap take you?



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KEVIN JORGESON ON THE WALL OF EL CAPITAN AT DAWN. USED WITH PERMISSION.



BY KEVIN JORGESON

MUSTERING

The Courage

It's a crisp winter morning in the eastern Sierra cowboy town of Bishop, California. As the sun crests the 14,000-ft summit of White Mountain, the Owens River Valley is filled with warm rays that take the nip out of the cold January air. Tucked near the base of Mt. Tom rest a cluster of tall granite boulders shaped like eggs and sprinkled across the landscape as if dropped from above. Climbers have been enjoying this famed boulder field and vertical playground, known as the Buttermilks, since 1941. For decades, climbers have used these boulders to hone their strength and technique. By the 1980s, bouldering had become a respected discipline of its own, instead of just practice for the real stuff in Yosemite.



KEVIN JORGESON AT THE POINT OF NO RETURN DURING THE FIRST ASCENT OF AMBROSIA, HIS HARDEST HIGHBALL FIRST ASCENT TO DATE IN BISHOP, CA. JANUARY 2009. PHOTO BY TIM KEMPLE. USED WITH PERMISSION.

The Buttermilks are best known for a special brand of climbing called highball bouldering, meaning the rocks are so tall that a fall from the top would put a climber in the hospital—or worse. Standing at the base of a 50' tall boulder, flush with golden morning light, I chalk my hands, breathe deep, and look up. I've been training for two years for this moment. With most climbing, I try. With highball bouldering, I must do (like Yoda). The consequences of indecision are too great. It's time to execute.

There's something special about highball bouldering that draws me in. Sure, it's risky. But there's more to risk than the potential downside. The upside rewards you with a complete mastery of your mind and body—despite the danger. For a fleeting moment, I exist in harmony as part of the landscape instead of a passive witness to it.

I didn't always see climbing this way. For the longest time, I thought the most important thing was how hard I could climb. I would travel to climbing areas all around the world in search of the smallest holds, the biggest moves, the cutting edge of what a human could do on rock. Then, in the summer of 2005, it all came crashing down. Literally.

On a warm summer day, my friends and I huddled under a steep boulder in Rocky Mountain National Park while an afternoon thunderstorm rolled over us. Lightning struck a few hundred feet away. Rain and hail fell with such force we couldn't hear each other's voices over the percussion. The boulder we hid beneath happened to feature one of the hardest climbs in the country, ironically named Nothing but Sunshine. To occupy ourselves while the storm blew, we started working on the moves.

Before long, we forgot all about the fact that we were in the middle of a storm. Instead, we became totally enthralled with the challenge in front of us, which remained dry because of the overhang. Harry, Jamie, and I all traded attempts, which usually involved a few seconds of intense effort before falling to the 3-inch-thick crash pads climbers land on when bouldering.

Then something unexpected happened, as if someone had turned down the force of gravity for a moment. I pulled onto the rock, and for once I didn't fall on the second move. Or the third. Or the fourth. I was through the crux. I could hear Harry and Jamie screaming encouragement over the pounding hail. But I was in no man's land, where I never expected to actually succeed. With 15 feet of air under my toes and a dangerous pit of talus below, Harry



DAY 1 FOR KEVIN JORGESON ON THE DAWN WALL PROJECT. PHOTO BY TOMMY CALDWELL. USED WITH PERMISSION.



THROUGH STORMS, HEARTBREAK, AND DOUBTS, TOMMY CALDWELL AND KEVIN JORGESON FORM A BOND. PHOTO BY BIG UP PRODUCTIONS. USED WITH PERMISSION.

and Jamie extended their arms upward, spotting me in case I slipped. And I did, off the dripping wet lower angle, top section of the climb. My feet hit Jamie's shoulders, pitching me forward into a headfirst dive into the crash pads. I face-planted hard, arms outstretched in an attempt to break my fall. Silence hung over the scene as I slowly started to move. I lifted my head, looked down, and realized my right hand missed the crash pads entirely and instead smashed into the talus. One attempt to move my wrist revealed it was clearly broken.

After a three-month rehab process, my first climbing trip is to Joshua Tree National Park in Southern California. Everything feels foreign. My inner dialog is that of a beginner again. "How do climbers put up with these painful shoes? Man, this rock is *sharp!*" Clearly, I'm going to need to ease back into this. I decide to leave the guidebook at the campsite and wander the surreal landscape. Instead of looking for the hardest climbs, I look for the most

There's something special about highball bouldering that draws me in. Sure, it's risky. But there's more to risk than the potential downside. The upside rewards with a complete mastery of your mind and body—despite the danger.

aesthetic *lines*—sweeping corners that reach for the sky, the vertical faces speckled with edges, and laser-cut cracks that beg to be climbed. All at

once, my entire value system around climbing recalibrates. Aesthetics and experience now matter more than sheer difficulty. I don't know it then, but this shift is permanent.

For the past three years, highball bouldering has been my art, and the Buttermilks my canvas. Like any art, I can't schedule the performance. I wake up one day, and I know it's time. The preparation is over. I am inspired. Giddy even. The outcome is all but assured.

Climbers often talk about the line between bouldering (safe ropeless climbing) and free soloing (deadly ropeless climbing). This project toes the line. Behind me, a half dozen of my closest friends keep a safe distance. Unlike Harry and Jamie in Colorado, there's nothing they can do by spotting me on this climb. I would crush them. Instead, each carries a few crash pads to protect the landing should anything go wrong in the first 25'. After that, they may as well not be there.



IN 2001, TOMMY CALDWELL ACCIDENTALLY CUT OFF HIS LEFT INDEX FINGER WITH A TABLE SAW IN A HOME REMODELING ACCIDENT. FOR MOST CLIMBERS, THIS WOULD BE A CERTAIN CAREER BENDER. FOR TOMMY, IT ONLY INCREASED HIS COMMITMENT TO THE SPORT. PHOTO: COREY RICH. USED WITH PERMISSION.



KEVIN JORGESON SPEAKING AT ciWEEK 8. PHOTO BY JENNIFER COLEMAN. USED WITH PERMISSION.

By now, everything feels familiar. I've practiced the moves using the safety of a rope dozens of times. Physically, I'm not asking my body to do anything it hasn't done before. While I am confident, the truth is I don't know how I'm going to react once I'm in the situation. I'm about to find out what it's like to be in uncharted territory

Looking back, I could try to recall what the next few minutes felt like, but I would be making it up. I don't remember. From the moment my right foot left the ground until the instant I sat on top of that big boulder, it seemed like I was on another planet.

Sitting on top of Ambrosia, I should feel joy and a sense of accomplishment, relief for escaping unscathed. Instead, I distinctly feel I got away with something, like I dodged a bullet. Instead of fulfilled, I feel empty. Before my feet return to solid ground, I know my days of pushing the highball bouldering envelope are over. On one hand, I have just redefined

what's possible for highball bouldering. On the other, my success mandates that I find a new discipline of the sport to master. Reinvention will be required. I chuckle at the irony.

Six months later, I sit in a movie theatre in Boulder, Colorado with several hundred other climbers to watch the annual Reel Rock Film Festival, which highlights the past year's greatest accomplishments. I squirm in my seat as the Ambrosia segment begins. I feel like I'm living in the past. My future is as uncertain today as I was that cold morning in January at the Buttermilks. Little do I know, the segment that is about to appear next will change the course of my life.

Tommy Caldwell is a living legend in the climbing community and was even before we completed the Dawn Wall. I grew up reading about his accomplishments in magazines and watching his videos. For the past ten years, Tommy had focused his efforts

exclusively on establishing first free ascents on El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. Every season, Tommy raised the bar with a new first ascent, somehow harder and more mind boggling than the last. His new project, now showcased on the big screen, was his most audacious yet. For once, this wasn't a story of success. It was chapter one in what was clearly going to be an epic drama of Moby Dick proportions.

To understand Tommy Caldwell, you must understand that he is a force, a man who, after accidentally cutting off his left index finger with a table saw, was told by his doctor to start thinking about a new career. Instead he vowed to return to professional climbing stronger than before. Sure enough, less than a year later, he did just that. This alone should provide the foundation for an epic story of an impossible dream, slowly willed into the realm of possibility after years of perseverance. But that wouldn't be the truth. Ambition can only take you so far.



TOMMY CALDWELL ON PITCH 20 OF THE DAWN WALL. PHOTO: BRETT LOWELL USED WITH PERMISSION.

The source of Tommy's drive is much deeper than the curiosity and ego that fuels most ambition. The truth is that Tommy was experiencing the first true failure of his life: the collapse of his marriage to his fellow professional climber Beth Rodden. From heartbreak, his need to escape from pain was born. Turning to the only thing he knew, Tommy sought the most impossible

looking swath of El Capitan to distract him from the anguish. Just like that, the Dawn Wall project was born.

Sitting in the audience, my jaw is agape. While all the other parts of the film festival presented a tidy beginning, middle and end this segment is clearly meant to tease, not satiate. For twenty minutes, we watch the world's finest big wall free climber fall off pitch after pitch

of the most improbable looking granite porcelain we'd ever seen.

In closing, Tommy lays down his gauntlet. "When I look at this next generation of climbers doing things on the boulders and sports climbs that I can't conceive of—if they could apply that kind of talent to the big walls—that's what it would take to climb this project. Even if I can climb this, I want to plant the seed for the next generation to inspire us all."

His message resonates. Have you been called out before? Perhaps you fell asleep in middle school English class only to have your teacher embarrass you. Sitting in the darkness of the theatre, the feeling is similar. As obvious as drool on the desk, I know I am guilty. This is my fate. The only question is whether I will act on this knowledge, or continue to float in a purgatory of uncertainty.

About a month later, I muster the courage to write Tommy an email, asking if he needs a partner for his new project on El Cap. I don't call because I don't have his phone number; we barely know each other. Our paths crossed once before when I was 17, so I have no idea if he will even take my question seriously. Enough time passes that I figure Tommy just laughed at my email. Around the time I give up hope, I receive a simple reply that says, "Sounds good! Meet me in Yosemite in October."

Tommy wastes no time initiating me with a giant slice of humble pie. I don't know it at the time, but he's about to test my spirit. Doubting I have what it takes, he figures it's best to break me early than drag me along for too long. Standing in the parking lot for the trail head, Tommy shoots me a sideways smile and says "Here, take this haul bag. We're going to hike up to the top of El Cap, sleep on top, and spend a few days working on the top of the route." I can't lift it. In fact, I have to sit on the ground to shoulder the pack and be pulled to my feet. Tommy's



A PARTNERSHIP IN THE MAKING, TOMMY CALDWELL AND KEVIN JORGESON LOUNGE IN THEIR PORTALEGE DURING A 2010 RECONNAISSANCE MISSION. PHOTO BY TIM KEMPLE. USED WITH PERMISSION.

Kevin Jorgeson began climbing as a toddler trees, fences, cupboards, ladders, everything. At age 10, he discovered rock climbing when he attended the grand opening of his local climbing gym.

By age 19, Kevin was the top-ranked climber for his age in the country. He then turned his focus toward solving the most beautiful and dangerous boulder problems in the world.

In 2009, he began work on the Dawn Wall project with Tommy Caldwell. On January 14, 2015—after 19-days on the wall and six years of work—Tommy and Kevin succeeded on what's being called the world's hardest climb.

www.kevinjorgeson.com

dad, a former Mr. Colorado body builder, lifts his 80lb pack himself. "Shit, if I can't keep up with Tommy's 65-year-old dad, I'm screwed," I think.

Three hours into the five-hour hike, I realize reinvention is a lot sexier in concept than in practice. Nonetheless, I press on. Occasionally, in an assault to my respiratory system, the waft of old man farts drifts down the trail. Sadly, my chicken legs are too weak to pass Tommy's dad, so I'm stuck drafting behind him for the entire hike. Five hours later, we finally reach the summit of El Cap. Under a moonless sky, I drop the haul bag with a thud and say, "Yeah! That felt good!"

Standing on top of El Cap for the first time, staring up at the stars, I wonder about my future. I am about to discover just how difficult reinvention is. My ego suffers a brisk and painful death. My confidence disappears. My feeling of self-worth crashes. Yet, from the ashes of my identity, a sprout of potential emerges. Watered by Tommy's patience and mentorship, my confidence slowly returns. My role as a pupil slowly evolves into that of an equal. Fueled

by a crazy mix of luck and fate, Tommy and I eventually succeed on the world's hardest big wall, inspiring a global audience along the way.

Of course, I don't know any of that at the time. I am only happy to have that

haul bag off my back. When I finally gaze down from the stars, I catch Tommy looking over at me, perplexed. His expression becomes both satisfied and amused. He has found a partner.



KEVIN JORGESON'S HANDS IMMEDIATELY AFTER TOPPING OUT A 19-DAY FIRST ASCENT OF THE DAWN WALL ON JANUARY 14, 2015. PHOTO BY BLYGH BILLIES. USED WITH PERMISSION.

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KENNY ARONOFF

One of the best-ever drummers, according to *Rolling Stone*



JILL HEINERTH

World-renowned explorer, named a "living legend" by *Sport Diver*

JONATHAN FRAKES

Director and actor best known for his role on *Star Trek TNG*



JOSH GATES

Archaeologist and host of Travel Channel's *Expedition Unknown*

NATHALIA HOLT

Bestselling author of *The Rise of the Rocket Girls*



ROB MANNING

Chief engineer for the Mars Pathfinder and Curiosity rovers

ROBBIE WOLFE

Co-host of History Channel's *American Pickers*



JILL PRUETZ

National Geographic anthropologist and chimpanzee expert

ROD PYLE

Filmmaker for the History Channel and author of *Destination Mars*



JAMES BARRAT

Filmmaker, author and expert in Artificial Intelligence

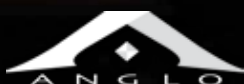
GABOR GEORGE BURT

Global innovation expert and bestselling author of *Slingshot*



DR. DAVID GALLO

Oceanographer and expedition leader to the RMS Titanic



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