



JIM HARSHAW JR

Revealing Failure as the Path to Success

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #96

Erik Weihenmayer

As an eye disease began to rob Erik of his vision by the age of 13, he resisted the idea that blindness would sweep him to the sidelines of life. He established himself as a formidable wrestler in high school, representing his home state of Connecticut in the National Junior Freestyle Wrestling Championship in Iowa.

Shortly after going blind, he received a newsletter in Braille about a group taking blind kids rock climbing. It wasn't long before he was hooked.

These early seeds of adventure eventually led him to hundreds of ascents around the world, including the Seven Summits- the highest peaks on each continent including the most formidable of them all— Mount Everest.

As a blind adventurer who has climbed Mt. Everest and more recently kayaked the Grand Canyon, Erik understands better than most that barriers are real, not merely perceived, and that obstacles encountered can either stop us in our tracks, or we can figure out a way to harness them and propel ourselves to new places that we would never get to in any other way.

As a speaker, he's shared the stage with George Bush, Al Gore, Colin Powell, General Norman Schwarzkopf and Stephen Covey. He's won an ESPY and has been on the cover of Time Magazine and featured on Oprah, 20/20 and many, many other media outlets.

Quotes

"We're all stuck sometimes and feel broken or shattered."

"Having a trust that life is good kept my hope alive."

"There's a storm of energy where, if you commit to riding it, it will take you to some crazy, wild places."

"Speaking it out loud is the first barrier."

About Erik's First Day of Wrestling Practice

"He pounded my head on the mat just like every other kid. After that, I was like, "This is my tribe. This is my family."

About Keeping Your Heart Open

"I just kept my heart open to new opportunities and new possibilities. When you keep your heart open and you fight that jadedness, that sense of negativity of lashing out and blaming and misdiagnosing all the problems, all the barriers that you have, when you're able to keep your heart open, just even a sliver, good things come into your life."

About Embracing Vulnerability and Not Knowing

"In the book, I write about something that I'm a big fan of. I obviously didn't make it up or anything. I mean, it was something I studied called metacognition. It was this idea of just being absolutely vulnerable and accepting of the fact of things you don't know. Ego can be a good thing but it can also get in the way if you don't want to look stupid or silly. So for me, I always adhered to this idea of metacognition. You're just being comfortable saying, 'I have no idea but I want to go on the fast track to learning and I'm going to sort of let all that stuff aside and I'm going to be absolutely vulnerable here, and I'm going to learn as fast as I can.' When you are in that spirit, people do take you under their wing. You'll find amazing mentors coming all around in your network and they'll teach you the things that you need to know. It's sort of another thing I learned through studying these characters of No Barriers. Because they were so open and vulnerable and appreciative of help, they went on the fast track to growth."

About Turning Adversities into Strengths

"The best thing we can do is to turn in to the storm. Our strengths are often born through adversity. If we attack our barriers, sometimes they turn into strengths that we didn't even know existed."

About Connecting With Your Inner Light

"You have to believe that there is something inside of us. We call it the human spirit or the light or soul, whatever you want to call it. But there's something inside that we've got to commit to tapping into. And I think that's maybe the greatest insight that we try to teach people, that I've seen people time and time again, either tap into or fail to tap into. We're constantly trying to teach people to tap into what you got. It may just be flickering at this point, it may be full of doubt and fear but you've got to tap into it and grow it, nurture it. And then use it to blaze forth into the world. As fragile and vulnerable and all the barriers that we have, we still got to commit to that and not just sit in that prison that we've created."

About Growing Continuously

"If you're not experiencing any adversity, then you're pretty rare but you commit to something that's going to make you stretch, make you grow. In my last book, I wrote about the idea of 'quitting, camping and climbing.' We just kind of made up these terms but they're based on real people and real statistics, most people reach a certain degree of success in their lives, and then they stopped. They start 'camping' for a number of reasons. That creates stagnation in our lives. So really commit to climbing. What is that stretch goal, that adversity challenge that you want to commit to? And then what you should do is write down all the things that are holding you back, all the reasons why you shouldn't do it. And then, really start analyzing those barriers and try to figure out how you're going to attack each of those and harness each of those every step of the way."

Recommended Books

The Adversity Advantage: Turning Everyday Struggles into Everyday Greatness - <https://goo.gl/vy1WZa>

Touch the Top of the World: A Blind Man's Journey to Climb Farther than the Eye Can See - <https://goo.gl/1ovSCg>

No Barriers: A Blind Man's Journey to Kayak the Grand Canyon - <https://goo.gl/AMQdXn>

Episodes referenced:

Kyle Maynard : www.jimharshawjr.com/5

Websites and Social:

www.nobarriersusa.org

www.touchthetop.com

<https://twitter.com/ErikWeihenmayer>