

Diana NyadXtreme Dream103 miles. Cuba to Florida. Summer 2012

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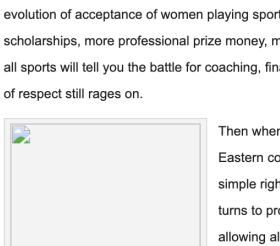
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Blog

The 5th World Conference on Women and Sport

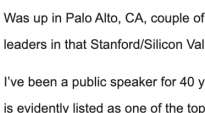
POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON FEB 21, 2012 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 0 COMMENTS

The 5th World Conference on Women and Sport took place in Los Angeles over the past few days. Dignitaries from the International Olympic Committee, the London Olympic Games, and sports organizing bodies from all over the world were here, with the focus on women athletes and their issues on today's world stage. I was asked to give the final keynote of the conference, in conjunction with actress Geena Davis, who has not only been an advocate for women athletes for many years now but who impressively made it all the way to the semi-finals of the Olympic Trials in archery just a few years ago.



Geena Davis - photo via ATR

I used my 20 or so minutes to recount the personal drama of what sports have done for my entire person, my entire life. Confidence, long-term belief, discipline, grace in defeat...all qualities that help us make a good life...were constructed as my personal foundation directly through my participation in sports. Yet, as much as the Title IX law and the evolution of acceptance of women playing sports in this country has huge growth in girls' athletic scholarships, more professional prize money, more sponsorship dollars for women athletes, women in all sports will tell you the battle for coaching, financial support, media coverage and all other measures of respect still rages on.



Then when we hear from the women of many African and Middle-Eastern countries, where playing sports is a luxury far beyond simple rights such as voting and basic education, the conference turns to programs and ideas that include a vision of one day allowing all women to garner the wealth of joy and character that come with pursuing our athlete selves...a pursuit that our brothers seem to earn as a birth right.

-Diana

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Public Speaking

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON FEB 21, 2012 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 0 COMMENTS

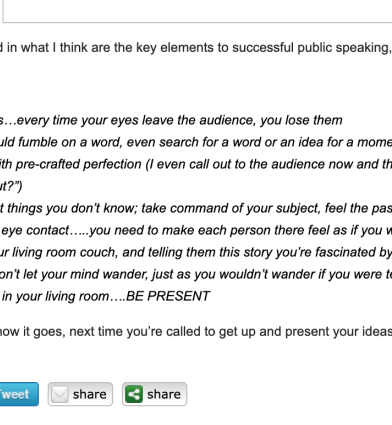
Was up in Palo Alto, CA, couple of days ago for a speech for JP Morgan and some of the community leaders in that Stanford/Silicon Valley intelligentsia crowd.

I've been a public speaker for 40 years now. And it always surprises me somewhat that public speaking is evidently listed as one of the top phobias many people have. Even above fear of snakes and spiders and heights, millions of people dread getting up even in front of small group and talking.

At 6th grade graduation, Jimmy Woodruff was our class speaker. I was sitting around in my little lace skirt, minding my own business when the principal came to me in a panic. "Diana, Jimmy is throwing his guts up in the bathroom. He's terrified of speaking today. Can't do it. Any chance you could come up with a few words?"

I relished the opportunity....and went on a bit too long.

I'm not adept at many things in life, but I can stand up in front of a crowd and engage them in life stories, crafted in an arc that takes us all on an interesting journey.



If you're interested in what I think are the key elements to successful public speaking, here are some basics:

1. Don't use notes...every time your eyes leave the audience, you lose them
2. Better you should fumble on a word, even search for a word or an idea for a moment, be real, than be PhD perfect with pre-crafted perfection (I even call out to the audience now and then: "I forget, what was I talking about?")
3. Don't talk about things you don't know; take command of your subject, feel the passion for it
4. Breathe, make eye contact...you need to make each person there feel as if you were alone, just the two of you, on your living room couch, and telling them this story you're fascinated by...eye to eye...sincere...don't let your mind wander, just as you wouldn't wander if you were telling an intimate story to someone in your living room...BE PRESENT

OK, let me know how it goes, next time you're called to get up and present your ideas in front of a group.

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Xtreme Dream 2012: Jellyfish Armor

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON FEB 7, 2012 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 11 COMMENTS

We have not been able to archive the video associated with this YouTube page.

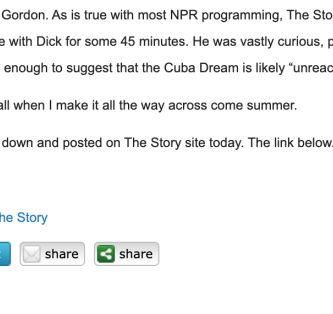


The Xtreme Dream is very much alive!
Come summer 2012 I will finally walk up on that Florida shore after swimming all those long miles from Cuba. I'm all ready, my body, shoulders, muscles and my mind are all prepared for the 60 to 70 hours to make it across. My world-class team of experts are ready for the challenge.
The only missing piece to this Xtreme Dream is finding protection from the deadly jellyfish out there. There are swimsuit makers working hard on solving this problem. Here's a few suits that might do the job. The jellyfish are a conundrum we have not yet solved, but we will get there.

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The Story with Dick Gordon

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON FEB 9, 2012 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 11 COMMENT



There's a new interview with me running on most NPR stations as of today. The show is called The Story. The host is Dick Gordon. As is true with most NPR programming, The Story allows some breathing room. I spoke with Dick for some 45 minutes. He was vastly curious, prompted new thoughts from me, and was bold enough to suggest that the Cuba Dream is likely "unreachable".

Dick may be the first call when I make it all the way across come summer.

The interview is edited down and posted on The Story site today. The link below.

Enjoy.

The Longest Swim - The Story

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Quiet Observation

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON FEB 1, 2012 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 0 COMMENTS

I was driving the other day and saw this woman set up with her easel, happily painting the landscape of arroyo and mountains in the distance. A friend encouraged me years ago to occasionally get out paper and pen or paints and try to quietly draw or paint the surroundings. It's become so easy for us to snap photos...and it's genius to quickly capture moments with our phones.

But my friend taught me the value of trying to recreate a scene with a brush because it's just amazing how more intently you observe an orange tree or a winding country road or a man's hat when you're trying to create your own image of it on paper...even if you're not trying for precise realism but rather an artistic interpretation of whatever you're painting.

Try it. It will set you free.

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Meaningful Dialogue About Tim Tebow

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON JAN 30, 2012 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 25 COMMENTS

Well, why should I be surprised that any topic on religion would draw some outrage, some controversy? I have read all your comments from my blog post very carefully and take a lot of your salient points with intellectual response, rather than emotional bias. I have admitted to feeling offended by Tebow's on-field prayers and I guess a number of you have felt the same way. But the arguments for freedom of expression, for applauding this young man's positive life and world-view, make me sit back and think. The conversation is rich. It's at the heart of the national zeitgeist at the moment. I have absolutely no disregard for anybody's religious beliefs. NONE. The discussion isn't about religious beliefs. It's about whether a football player, the leader of the team, should carry his religious mantle above the rest of the team's beliefs.

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Tim Tebow: Separation of Church and Sport

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON JAN 27, 2012 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 43 COMMENTS

Now that the Tim Tebow show is over for this season, I have observed enough to take a stand on his proselytizing on the field.

As a football player, he's a force. A bold leader, a positive burst of energy, an agile and powerful runner, even if he's not yet an impressive, accurate passer. I have no reason to doubt that he will carve out a successful NFL career for himself.

I do, however, rail against his acting out his faith in such a public forum, while in his team uniform.

When at the University of Florida, he was well known for painting different numbers of Biblical scriptures into his eye black. You would see the number "3:16" under his eyes, for instance, in reference to that chapter and verse of the Bible. In the end, the NCAA outlawed players displaying such public signs of personal faith.

I, for one, was a public radio journalist who spoke out against his eye black expressions. He was in his University uniform, representing the Gator Nation. It wasn't fair for his teammates, nor anybody else from his school, to be lumped in with his own private beliefs.

So now he is a Denver Bronco and again he sets himself apart from his teammates by constant public display of his Christian faith.

Quite a few players kneel in a quick prayer or point to the sky in recognition of their God after a successful moment on the field. OK. But if you tune in to the Tebow proselytizing through out a game, it is outrageous in its persistence. NFL Films did an hour special on Tebow late in the season. Unlike the networks that cover live games, NFL films have microphones in the huddles, on the sidelines. You can hear every breath, every syllable.

When Tebow sits with the quarterback coach on the bench, when he approaches the guys in the huddle, when he runs to a wide receiver after a big play, he does say the right "football stuff". "Come on guys, this is THE 3rd down we need. We need it NOW." But before any syllable he utters, every single time, it is first "God is good". "God is great." "My God is an awesome God". "It's God's will." As he roams the sideline, mouthing, you think he's talking to the defense on the field, urging them on. No, he's singing, "God is my saviour. God is almighty".

He often gathers even the Christians on the other team after a game and gets them in a circle to kneel and pray together.

I say take it into the locker room. What if, at the end of every session of Congress, the Christians gathered and knelt and prayed together, right there on the Congress floor? As was true at the University of Florida, doesn't this constant Christian promotion, in a Broncos uniform, trump the other common bonds of the team? Doesn't Tebow separate himself from his non-Christian teammates?

Or am I just the kid who in first grade went to the principal to demand that I not be forced to speak aloud the words "Under God" in the pledge of allegiance to the flag? (Point of interest: The original Pledge of Allegiance, written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy, did not have the words "Under God". President Eisenhower in 1954 requested that Congress add the two words, despite the protest of Bellamy's daughter.)

Tim Tebow is admirably inspired by his strong faith. He does many good works, from building schools for the poor to bringing disabled and underprivileged individuals to the sidelines of his games. His particular brand of Christianity requires that he spread the gospel far and wide. But when he wears a uniform, he owes that team the respect of making his faith more private expression, less public spectacle.

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TEDMED

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON JAN 25, 2012 IN BLOG, SLIDER | 2 COMMENTS

If you haven't yet sipped the TED Kool-Aid, get yourself a straw. I've been a public speaker for 35 years now but hit the Mt Everest of conferences when I spoke for the TEDMED conference this past October. The concept is 50 speakers, the most forward-thinking mavericks on our planet. Each one gets only 15 minutes. Each one is unique, powerful, and leaves your mind significantly expanded. The TED folks launched my speech on YouTube this week. There have been thousands of inspired responses.

Trust me. Get your straw ready and immerse yourself in the exciting zeitgeist of TED.

- Diana

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It's Never Too Late

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON JAN 24, 2012 IN BLOG | 5 COMMENTS



This is my close, dear friend of 35 years, Candace Hogan. Candace grew up a land athlete. Quick on the track, great on the softball field, agile in a soccer game. But she never had exposure to pools or the ocean and thus never learned how to swim.

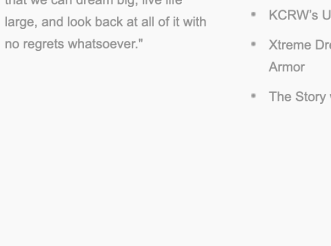
When we were both 40, living in NYC, we used to go upstate New York to those idyllic warm lakes and ponds where Candace was determined to do something about NOT spending the rest of her life as a non-swimmer. I taught her (and our buddy LeAnne Schreiber, another land beast) the basic freestyle stroke. They worked at it every summer and to and behold, some 20-plus years later, Candace can swim across those lakes. She can stroke miles off the coast out into the deep ocean. A swimmer (two swimmers...LeAnne the same success story!!!) is born.

Yet another living example of "It's Never Too Late".

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Tragic News Has Arrived

POSTED BY XTREME DREAM TEAM ON JAN 20, 2012 IN BLOG | 0 COMMENTS



World champion freestyle skier Sarah Burke, only 29 years old, has died of massive brain injuries, suffered just a few days ago while training for the upcoming X Games.

Sarah came to our Billie Jean King Women's Sports Foundation black-tie dinner in New York most Octobers over recent years. Her bold passion for her sport, and insistence that women in her sport be included in the Olympics (a crusade she single-handedly fought and won), was palpable.

Finally, after winning 4 X-Games gold medals, Sarah was primed to fulfill her long-term vision and win Olympic gold in Sochi, Russia, 2014. That dream is not to be fulfilled.

I will remember Sarah as a huge smile and constantly open personality, to go along with that fighting spirit. She knew each of the 100 athletes at the end of our week-ends in New York, could recall their sports stats, the names of their parents and children and dogs. There was no doubt that we were going to witness the fly-highing, maverick Super-piper on the gold medal stand in Sochi.

May the magnanimous soul and champion spirit of the ebullient and talented Sarah Burke rest in peace forever.

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- If you're interested in what I think are the key elements to successful public speaking check out my new blog post <http://it.co42qjTT4L> about 10 hours ago from HootSuite
- @aroundtherings features the speaker lineup at the IOC's 5th World Conference on Women & Sport. <http://it.co42qjTT4L> about 13 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to AroundTheRings
- @designverb Hope your server is fixed. Happy Tuesday! about 18 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to Designverb
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