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DON YAEGER

I study high performers in sports for lessons in business leadership.

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Make Someone's Day!

A weekly nugget of inspiration to share with those you care most about!

[Episode 6] Make Someone's Day

by [Don Yaeger](#) on July 9, 2018 at 1:49 pm

Their "no" doesn't control your "go" How do you measure success? Share [...]

The New 61

Written by [Don Yaeger](#) on May 10, 2011. Posted in [Success Magazine](#)

Thirty years after a dream eluded her, swimmer Diana Nyad is out to show the world what commitment looks like.

More than 90 miles of open ocean lies between Cuba and South Florida. For Diana Nyad, that stretch of shark-infested water equates to about 65 continuous hours of solitude, if all goes well—no rest, no physical contact with another person, no sound or movement except for the rhythmic kick-stroke-breathe, kick-stroke-breathe. Nyad, 61, is swimming every inch of this journey without assistance... or a shark cage.

UPDATE 8/9/11:

From the moment you meet Nyad, her passion for life is obvious. Everything she talks about carries a note of excitement, an audible thrill for the opportunity each new day brings. Nyad's impressive résumé—multiple world-record holder in endurance swimming, journalist, author and motivational speaker—belies her personal philosophy that life isn't really a series of accomplishments. For Nyad, it's more about pulling together all the elements that go into the pursuit of a goal and seeing where they take you.

"You don't simply tell someone to get out there and win the tennis match," she tells SUCCESS. "You say 'move your feet' or 'watch the fuzz on the ball' to really get into the Zen of it. You pull all that together and then you just might hold up the Wimbledon Plate.... It's not about winning first place but bringing every element of effort to whatever you do."

[Episode 5] Make Someone's

Day

4 captures *Yaeger on June 25, 2018 at*
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[Episode 4] Make Someone's Day

by *Don Yaeger* on June 12, 2018 at
8:24 pm

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Greatness is available to all of
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Don's Latest!

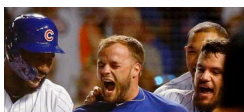
Check out Don Yaeger's latest
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Conversation With Football's Roger Staubach

Are you someone worth
following? What about you
would make you that person
everybody should want to
follow? What is it you could work
on that makes sure that it stays
that way? Roger Staubach's life
shows us [...]



Four Ways
To Be

Battling
shoulder
pain, asthma
and nausea,
Diana Nyad
called off the
swim at the
halfway mark
between
Cuba and
Florida.

Nyad's determination to fully invest in every aspect of
a pursuit is one of the compelling forces behind her
August 2011 swim from Cuba. The intense training,
discipline and drive are more than making up for her
becoming the first person to swim from Cuba to Florida
feat. She laughs at how obvious that must seem
since, after all, it would be crazy to think that 65 hours
of isolation and extreme physical exhaustion would
be the reward.

To understand her perspective, you have to know a
little more about Nyad. In 1975, she swam around
Manhattan Island in a jaw-dropping seven hours and
57 minutes. In 1979, she swam from Bimini to Florida,
a distance of 102.5 miles, which set a new world
distance record that stood for nearly 20 years. And
she did it all with a smile, loving the opportunities she
got to push herself and embrace new challenges.

One of her biggest challenges was her first attempt to
swim from Cuba to Florida in 1978. "For previous
generations, swimming the English Channel was the feat to accomplish," she
says. "And that's been done. Now, there is probably no other body of water that
has the mystery and mythology to it like the stretch between the U.S. and Cuba
has."

But her dream to conquer that distance was curtailed more than 30 years ago by
rough seas and strong winds. After 42 hours of swimming, with her only "breaks"
coming when she stopped to tread water while eating peanut butter for energy
or drinking fresh water handed to her from the escort boat, she was forced to
face the reality of the situation; the weather had blown them so far off course
that they didn't have sufficient provisions and equipment to last. More than two-
thirds of the way into the swim, she was forced to abandon the effort.

Nyad was disappointed but undaunted. She had proven to herself that she had
the discipline and mindset to train for the task; sometimes circumstances just
don't allow for plans to come together the way we'd like them to. Instead, she
turned her attention to other goals, eventually moving from swimming to new
challenges. She's been part of a team that cycled the length of Vietnam. She's
kayaked waterfalls in Borneo. She has establish a career as a respected
journalist, covering everything from the Olympic Games to banned substances in
major league sports as a correspondent for Fox Sports and National Public
Radio, besides writing a number of books and articles. "It's not like I was waking
up in cold sweats with regrets that I hadn't done the swim," she says.

But as 60 neared, she began to evaluate her life and consider what she really
wanted to do with her self-described "prime years." When her mother died, Nyad
was struck by "how quickly this precious life goes by" and decided to prove that
no one should just fade into retirement simply because that's what society
dictates.



Great And Celebrate: Lessons From

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Cub David Bote

A rookie hitting a grand slam to win the game in the 9th inning, with two outs, deserves more than the quiet, staid celebration expected by the purists of the game. It's a moment kids fantasize about when [...]



Brooks Koepka: Managing Insults And Slight All The Way

Up The Leaderboard

If you've ever been slighted or snubbed, then you and PGA golfer Brooks Koepka have something in common. He didn't whine, complain, or vent his frustrations – as many of his opponents were doing. He [...]

She longed for that feeling of commitment and drive that had been so important in all of her swimming feats when she was younger. And there was only one challenge she'd chased in her life that she wished had gone differently, so she started to plan.

"I think 60 is when many people hit their prime," she says. "We elect many of our presidents in their 60s. At that age, people are full of ideas and their best self. I wanted to dig into my potential and bring out my best self."

It wasn't about torturing her body to prove she wasn't getting older. "It's not masochism," she laughs. "I just had to look at myself in the mirror... and say, 'You have this in you!'"

And so, more than 30 years after retiring from swimming, Nyad hit the ocean again. It's a lesson she says is relevant to everyone: "Write that novel. Start that business you've always wanted to. The ultimate high of life is the commitment to pursuing something. I wanted to feel that commitment again."

Nyad's hours in the water give her a lot of time to separate herself from concrete thinking and exercise her mind in new ways. With so much exertion and such limited stimulation for the senses (quiet water, foggy goggles), the logical side of the mind powers down and a dreamlike state takes over. In the 1970s when she trained, Nyad explained that her mind would often wander to questions along the lines of: "What is life about? What is the universe? All sorts of Zeitgeist stuff... But then you hear a whistle from the boat or see a dark shape pass underneath you in the water—and it kind of wakes you up."

She still has her deep moments but admits it's not all so serious. Recently, while training in Mexico, her nephew's fiancée handed Nyad a hard-boiled egg and peanut butter from the escort boat and asked what she thought about while swimming. The mysteries of life under the ocean? Whether humans will ever have to live under the sea because of the state of life on Earth? Actually, Nyad answered, "I was singing the Beverly Hillbillies theme. The rhythm matched my strokes."

Nyad isn't out to solve any of mankind's great questions or problems. She isn't trying to chase after a dream of her youth. She really just wants to celebrate the hard work and focus that have carried her so far in life and will continue to drive her to new goals for as long as she is willing to pursue them. It's not about the record books or trying to fatten up her résumé— she certainly isn't focused on that right now. Instead, her upcoming swim is about pouring herself into a project with the same passion and vigor she has always brought to life and showing others they can do the same. She insists that "retirement age" doesn't mean anything anymore. "I want people to see me and say, 'Wow! That's the new 61!'"

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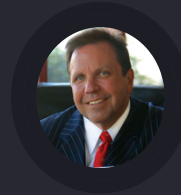
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"After hearing Don speak, I immediately decided my team would find significant value by being exposed to his philosophies on both business and character."

Eric Martorano

Sr. Director, U.S. SMB Channel Group, Microsoft



Don Yaeger is an Award-Winning Keynote Speaker, eleven-time New York Times Best-selling author, and team culture expert.

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