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Diana Nyad Extreme Dream

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On July 10th, at the age of 60, legendary open-water swimmer Diana Nyad will attempt to complete her first marathon swim in over 30 years. Nyad's triumphant return to long-distance swimming will take her 50 miles off the Florida Coast to begin a consecutive 24-hour swim through the Gulf Stream's open-water and back to the Florida shoreline, without a shark cage.

THE DREAM

None of us can go back in our lives and relive periods we think we could have done better. And no athlete, especially, can go back and capture that one moment he or she always dreamed of achieving.

See the trailer to Diana's documentary on her Extreme Dream Challenge

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I broke many records in my prime as a long-distance swimmer back in the 1970's, in my twenties. For my world record—102.5 continuous miles from the Bahamas to Florida in 1979—and other swims, such as breaking the 50-year-old mark for circling Manhattan Island, many Halls of Fame have honored me. I had a stellar athletic career and achieved my dream of swimming the farthest openwater swim in history. Yet my dream of swimming from Cuba to Florida was dashed in 1978, after fighting stiff winds and huge seas for 41hrs, 49 mins, and still not reaching the Florida coast.

The Earth is four-fifths water. I could plan a 100-mile swim just about anywhere. But I've already swum 100 miles. What I didn't do was the swim I invented, Cuba to Florida.

Until a year ago, I hadn't swum a stroke for 31 years. Swimmer's burnout gripped me to the point that I could have sworn I would never, ever swim a lap again in my life. But approaching 60 last year threw me into the existential angst of wondering what I had done with my life. I felt choked by how little time seemed left. I started swimming a few laps, just to take some pressure off the knees from all the other activities I enjoy.

My workouts escalated. My motivation started to burn like a fire in my soul. One day I was driving, after a long swim, and I stopped and looked hard in the rearview mirror. And I said to myself: This is one dream I actually could go back and achieve. At 60, I could swim from Cuba to Florida. This time, without a shark cage.

I was experiencing what millions my age are feeling these days. Disenfranchised, no longer valued, terribly worried that my best days were behind me. Yet the business of life is to live large and you can dream at any age. To me the phrase "60 is the new 40" is not a joke. We baby boomers can put truth into those words. We are far from irrelevant at 60. We're now emotionally mature, brimming with

Diana Nyad

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wisdom and calm, still physically strong. This should be the prime of our lives. Training for this swim has filled me with the heartening, empowering conviction that it's never too late to chase your dream.

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Extreme Dream. For Diana Nyad's representation please contact Pam Derderian pamd@15minutesinc.com

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