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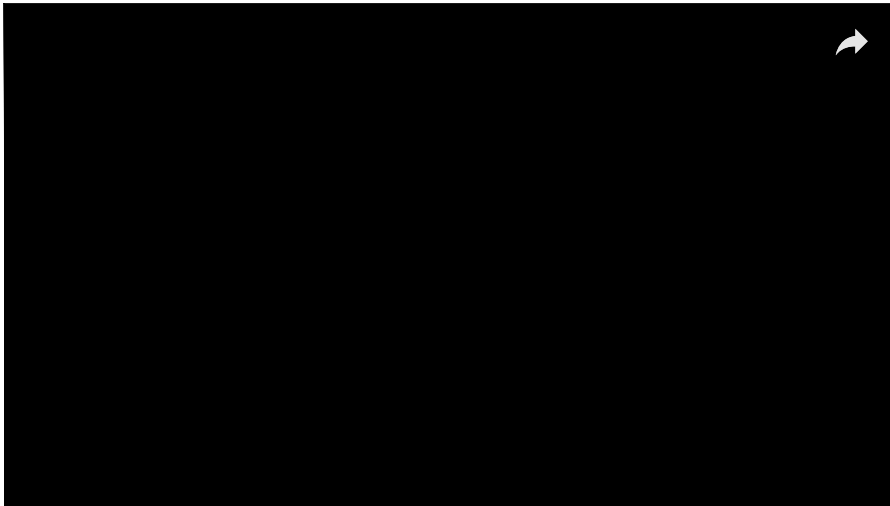
Diana Nyad Xtreme Dream 103 miles. Cuba to Florida. Summer 2011

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Diana reflects on her swim, 1 week later

Posted by Xtreme Dream Team on Oct 3, 2011 in Blog, Slider | 26 comments



One week later, Diana reflects on her swim and asks for your help in dealing with the disappointment she's going through. Share your stories of overcoming disappointments, staying positive and looking back with pride.

-Xtreme Dream Team

Archives

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Diana's Tweets



- @rauchjr44 I appreciate all the support! about 4 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to rauchjr44
- @cacambo43 Thank you for attending. I appreciate and love the support about 4 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to cacambo43
- RT @makeashift: @diananyad Congrats on making the eHow 100 list on Shift!: <http://t.co/XMLV730F> #makeashift about 4 hours ago from HootSuite
- @ehow Thank YOU! about 4 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to eHow
- I will be chatting LIVE with @kabcstudio radio this AM - 9:33 EST. <http://t.co/mhoLrwoQ> about 7 hours ago from HootSuite

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26 Comments



Cecilia

October 3, 2011

Oh goodness ... Diana, you DO KICK ASS ... some incredible FIERCE ASS ... I trained all summer to do a fundraising bike challenge this past weekend, 50 miles was the initial plan and then I did SO well in my fundraising efforts I decided to do 75 miles (the longest) and I was on par, training wise, to be able to do it and I think I could have done it ... however, slight hiccup in my training physically and emotionally when my father passed and I had to go to Sweden (from Saint Louis MO) for 2 weeks right before the event for funeral etc. ... My father would have been proud for 75 but he was equally proud for 50 ... but still that competitive swimmer in me wanted to do the 75 ... but I didn't ... and I did just fine with the 50 ... BUT ... you know ... I followed your swim as I was in Sweden and I "held my thumbs" for you ... a Swedish thing ... but it did not happen ... we can't have powers over EVERYTHING as much as we would like to and in this case you didn't at the same time we, and I am speaking for many people I am sure, are so proud of you for even attempting this fate that you should feel no less of a person for not getting all the way ... You are an inspiration to so many people and a hope I am at least to my kids for even finishing the 50 miles yesterday ... Do not feel bad ... and I won't either, one swimmer to another ... you ROCK and you DID KICK ASS ... some ROYAL FIERCE ASS ... (OK so my kids won't be so proud of me for that language ... he he he)...

Cecilia Thurman (I used to babysit for someone in LA who your partner used to train who could not understand swimmers high threshold for pain ... ha ha ha ... a famous guy 😊)

Reply



Nancy Curran

October 3, 2011



Just as you were committed to your Dream one stroke, one breath at a time, you can use that training for this continuation of the Dream. When we connect with something greater than we are, and commit to it as you have with the ocean

(Mother Nature) it is imperative that we remember we are not alone! Therefore our dream is not our own, but ours with other.

That other was huge for you. As you continue day to day, the dream is continuing BUT it is not just your dream anymore. It is the dream of the 1.3 million who joined you. It is the dream of Nature asking us to honor her. It is the dream of going beyond our limitations in ALL ways, including allowing our dreams to evolve.

Your swimmer's shoulders are broad and strong. May you hold this Dream through its completion. May you find the shore that is its endless nature, and may you have the perseverance and inspiration to hold the course. We are all journeying with you. Thank you!

Reply

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Angie

October 3, 2011

Diana,

You rocked it lady! Following your story has helped me come out of a 15 year funk and become physically active again. I have lost 45 pounds and am training for a sprint triathlon. During the swim I just think of your determination and feel so empowered. You have showed me there are no challenges you can not face and how to be fearless. At 38 I am in the best shape of my life and YOU had something to do with that. Keep on keeping on! What's next?!?!

Reply



Ty Yarnell

October 3, 2011

Sometimes it is not how we handle victory that defines us but rather how we handle adversity. The Creator and all her forces joined with you in your dream. Perhaps it is the articulation of the "dream" that is flawed or limited not the journey. When we live our life open to The Creators "dream" for us, we respond to the miracles of every moment. To think that it took the most poisonous creature in the ocean to redirect you to the "journey"~ whatever that means in your miraculous life. I find that having faith and grace is what gets me through the re-definition of my "dream". Keep dreaming BIG sister and allow the miracles of the journey to share the spot light.

Reply



Lynne Wiggers

October 3, 2011

I imagine that you are working through oh-so-many-thoughts, emotions and physical issues related to your 2nd swim. And maybe even the 1st swim, since it all happened so close together.

I am totally stoked and excited to see what your next steps are! I have a sense that you will continue along your journey with gusto and passion and invite the

rest of us to join in... in a way, combining all our paths and converging into One Path To Greatness, demonstrated uniquely in each of us.

We share your griefs; we share your joys and your strengths and your weaknesses. We share humanity. Please keep on going and keep on being a light for us. I can't thank you enough for the way you've revived my spirit. No

more excuses for me! Time is a gift not to be wasted but to be invested fully in the Living.

Blessings on you and your closest ones, Sister!

Lynne

Reply



Mollie

October 3, 2011

Diana, Not only do you inspire with your dream and what you have accomplished (which is TREMENDOUS), but you inspire with your honesty about what you are going through right now. That sense of disappointment, maybe even feeling a little lost. So often we (especially women) want to power through, feel strong, stay independent and not admit when the times are tough. Thank you for speaking about it.

Reply



Kristen

October 3, 2011

Hi Diana, I've followed you on your quest for what seems like forever! I root for you and have wanted you to make it because I KNOW that you can do this. The problem is that you are swimming in waters where you have no idea what is lurking to get you. It's not about your ability to swim the distances, it becomes something else when you are battling sharks/the cage, and the jellyfish – and God knows what else!

You can realize your dreams of successfully swimming whatever distances you conceive of, but I wish you would stop using the ocean and instead think of coming to Michigan where the Great Lakes are vast, many lives lost in these unforgiving waters of the north. The challenge is just as great, but here you are limited by only yourself, not creatures of the deep. I want to cheer you on when you swim under one of the great bridges of the world – the Mackinaw Bridge – five miles long through the straits of Mackinaw. You pick the distance because there are 400 miles of uninterrupted FRESH water!

You totally rock Diana!

Reply



Julie Richardson Milunic

October 3, 2011

Diana: I'm sure you won't remember me, but in 1966 I was a 7th grade boarding student at PC, who had gone there for swimming. You were older. You were my idol. That being said, I have followed your amazing accomplishments all of these years. Congratulations on living your dream!

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There is an author, Byron Katie, who wrote a powerful book called Loving What Is. One of her quotes is, "Life is simple. Everything happens for you, not to you. Everything happens at exactly the right moment, neither too soon nor too late. You don't have to like it... it's just easier if you do."

So, you could live in gratitude for those box jellyfish. You could appreciate their

beauty and their power. You could thank them for stopping you when they did – as you don't know if something else would have happened later that could have taken more of a toll on you. As it is, you have the knowledge and satisfaction that your mind/body were prepared. Your team was prepared. You know you have touched and influenced a million people strong.

You have shown people that dreaming big is powerful. Congratulations to you and your team.

Reply



Victoria

October 3, 2011

Diana,

I suspect that as a professional competitive athlete, your inclination is to look at this in terms of the final reward: finishing. I want you instead to think of the moment you jumped into the water in Cuba. Because that's the image burned into my memory. In that moment, to me, is everything. Had Mother Nature blessed you with no infernal creatures of the deep, and had you been able to make it to the shore of Florida, that would've been a wonderful image too. But the sight of you jumping in holds the lesson we all so badly need — that we must try. We can't control the outcome, but we still have to get out there and swing the bat.

I'm a single mother of a two-year old boy. Try, I tell him when he sees something he doesn't think he can do. Give it a shot. See how it works. Give it a go.

Sometimes he fails. Or falls. Or spills paint all over himself. Or ruins his food. Or gets his head bumped. He is bound to "fail" a certain percentage of the time, that's inevitable. But a certain other percent, he succeeds. Or he succeeds but in a different way from what he thought.

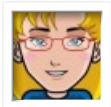
You succeeded too, but in a different way from what you thought.

To me, you succeeded the moment you decided to give it another shot. The moment you dedicated yourself to the task again. The moment you stepped off the shore in Cuba.

You kicked ass. Of course you did. You're an amazon. That's how you're wired.

You think anything but a total amazon could accomplish what you've accomplished? No way. You're a total inspiration. And for me, you didn't have to swim seventy-something miles — all you had to do was step off a rock in Cuba.

Reply



Donna Gaudet

October 3, 2011

Diana...

You are a big dream kind of person. For you, it's either go big or go home. Every goal takes on Olympic proportions and efforts otherwise they are just not worth doing. With that kind of personality, the fastest way to swallow the bitter pill of

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your second swim is to set another goal. What that goal looks like is up to you. Will you try the swim again? Third time is the charm? Or, will you set a goal to use your talents and experience to help others (especially women) that want to swim and reach their goals. You could set an awfully big goal in this category that would take a lot of your time and effort and passion and energy...perhaps an all women open water swim (both short and long-distance options) or a set of week-long clinics or both. The details are up to you. All I know is that energy such as yours has to be channeled or it goes stale. Turned upon itself, strong desire and passion can lead to depression and bitterness. Give yourself a little time to grieve your recent losses, then get back on the horse and find your next challenge. I know you can do it!

Reply



Dee Dee

October 3, 2011

You have no idea how much you have inspired so many of us at all levels.

I know that I was WWDD'ing a few times over the last week so thank you, thank you, thank you.

Reply



Cathy

October 3, 2011

You inspired me when you used to train in NY at Sports Training Institute. Many years and 2 kids later I heard about your new attempt to try the swim again. It inspired me to do a sprint triathlon in Philadelphia last summer with my daughter. We both finished – she FAR ahead of me but I had a level of satisfaction that at 60 years old I got out of my chair and did something. Maybe you couldn't compete with the jellyfish but think about the people you motivated to get up and do something....and that may be a far larger accomplishment.

Cathy Devine

Reply

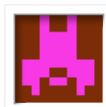


Cynthia

October 3, 2011

Hey Diana...I feel your pain...my girlfriend of ten years impulsively broke up with me just prior to our move to Hong Kong, so I am dealing with my own dissapointments. It's bittersweet, however, in that am back to being the great me that I was before that very trying relationship. On the humorous side, I am attending a big gay halloween party here, and I am dressing up as you!!!! I am memorizing your speech and I am going to KICK ASSSSSSSSSSSSSS!!!!!!!!! YOU KICK ASS, GIRL!

Reply



Ginger Garrett

October 3, 2011

It is hard to watch the disappointment in your eyes even though I don't know you. I am glad that you are letting yourself grieve and that you are talking about how you feel. Sometimes that is hard for strong women athletes to do. I am going

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through a difficult time right now and your dream has shown me how important it is to live "extreme." I had forgotten about the fact that I am an athlete and I only know how to live like one. I figure that your endorphins are probably just starting to ebb after a week and now the truth sets in. But remember that it is your truth. You are true to yourself and others. You didn't leave anything in the water. You gave more than all you had. Sometimes you just get beat in sports and in life. Don't rush yourself and be kind to yourself. You are number one in the world in courage and commitment. I hope those jellyfish died when they stung you!!! I plan to do a custom workout from you and Bonnie when you have time to get back in touch. Until then...onward. I bet you are already thinking of the next dream. That's what dreamers do.

Reply



Na'ama

October 3, 2011

Dear Diana,

Disappointment is real, and it is healthy. It is a part of the process, the mirror image of triumph. It does not diminish hope, or accomplishment, nor make dreams less meaningful or worthy. Someone wrote something already that I wanted to second: the triumph is in the doing, in the dream that turns to a path. It is that path which builds and makes us who we are, not the outcome. Without the path, without the effort, the hours of hard training, the days of achy muscles and will power and the many things you had to give up along the way—completing the swim would have no meaning.

It would be easy, it would not be a dream. Definitely not an Extreme Dream...

So it is in the process—the millions of breaths you took and strokes you plowed the water with that your winning is already interwoven. It is the path of dreaming big and going for it that made you who you are, that makes you GREAT. That makes you an inspiration.

And yet, you are no less human. And grief for what could've been or was hoped for is okay. I think I'm echoing many when I say that we feel you, and for you. And that—for as far as one who did not swim those dreams with you can—I understand. Right now, perspective might be colored by the outcome not being what you'd hoped for.

In the long run (hopefully to come not too long from now), I think that you are inspiring even more by the fact that this did NOT go as you planned and wanted it. Again. By how you are in this and what you make of it. By acknowledging both the validity of the dream and the pain of disappointment, you are lighting a beacon for the realities of most our lives; when dreams and hopes get shattered... And souls need not be shattered, too...

While there's nothing that would've made me happier than cheering you across that finish line—virtually though it might've been—I truly believe that you are modeling greatness even more in this time of difficulty and bewilderment, pain and shattered hope. It is that very realness that teaches and inspires; that very authenticity that resonates; this beautiful interwoven stubbornness and vulnerability in you that makes you absolutely shine through this.

You already won and you keep on winning. If you wanted to inspire, you have. And are. May you KNOW it. FEEL it. OWN it. As it seems many of us know you can.

Reply

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Terrie Wurzbacher

October 3, 2011

Diana,

so many of your readers have elaborated on beautiful concepts so I can't even hope to be on their par. But it would be awesome if you used your perceived

stories of the success you've inspired and what people have accomplished because of you. A "record" lives til broken. A book lives forever and when you take so many people's lives and make them a part of your life, it will last for an eternity and inspire people forever. As one of your fans above wrote, you have probably inspired more people by not making it -I agree with that completely because people want to continue with you at this point and help you through your disappointment. Had you succeeded, you would go about your way and we would have been forgotten. By asking for our help, you're involving us in your true success and that is something we will all be extremely grateful for. Just the fact that you asked us how to overcome disappointment shows what a terrific person you are (we already knew you were a wonderful athlete).

You will also be able to help so many of the injured veterans who have sustained extreme life changing injuries. These are Soldiers or Marines whose life has been about fitness and athletic ability. Suddenly their lives have changed and they cannot think of trying to achieve any dreams. You are doing so much to inspire them to know they can try anything (again, one of your fans wrote about the greatness of knowing you tried). You might save many of them from total despair if you share how you handled the training and then the problems along the way as you swam. I see so much value in just sharing your recent life with so many who are struggling. Your Extreme Dream should be a book and/or even a reality TV show. Just to keep inspiring people.

thanks for everything Diana!

Terrie

Reply



Joan

October 3, 2011

Diana

as a fellow 62 year old compaitive athlete..I have had my share of "failures" and races not finished..due to ongoing injury however, that said, I am pursuing a 'huge dream"like yourself.. That the dream does not come to fruition when I want it to is just a little obstacle..I am inching my way towards it.. and will get there.

Do not let 2 attempts slow you or deter you from your goal..I am of the opinion that one does whatever it takes to get there.. ie: using a shark tank (even though that was not part of your original plan)..Please do not give up because you have decided that '2 attempts is enough' or whatever 'story' you may have 'written' about this ..carry on.. continue to go for it.. You did well.. you are heroic but do not stop there.

2 quotes came across my desk today and I wanted to share them with you
"people do not decide to become extraordinary. They decide to accomplish extraordinary things" Sir Edmund Hillary

"what matters most is how well you walk through the fire" Charles BUKowski

Reply

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About this capture



Swimming Vacation

October 3, 2011

Thanks Diana for sharing your optimism again! We do appreciate your incredible efforts! You're looking much better now than one week ago. Keep on going and we cant wait to see you back in the action again. Years don't matter! All best.

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Reply



Marilyn

October 3, 2011

Diana, You may be a superwoman (and I believe that you are!) but you are also a mortal human being. You gave it your best shot! The jellyfish defeated you; you didn't quit. You more than covered the distance in 2 swims, a month apart. Nothing to be disappointed about; only Pride is an option. You're a true champion! Thanks for your commitment and inspiration.

Reply



Sandy

October 3, 2011

Hi Diana!

I am a 7th grade language arts teacher and I changed my lesson plans on Friday to show your CNN documentary...This was followed up today (Monday) with our class "article of the week", in which I let my students know the outcome of your last attempt. Most were so inspired and impressed by your story that they had already googled the information over the weekend because they didn't want to wait for the article! I have a few swimmers in my class (one did a 1/2 mile lake swim on Sunday) who were in awe! The general consensus of our class discussion was that you are an inspiration to all of us to live life out loud, be present in the moment, participate in life, set goals and dream big!

I also shared your story with my family...our new phrase is now- what's your "Cuba to Florida" going to be today?!

Thank you for sharing your journey!

Reply



Laura B.

October 3, 2011

You are so awesome Diana! I love your total honesty with everything. Really you haven't any cause to be disappointed. You very well could have died from those jellyfish, many have. That further shows your bravery and spirit! I look at life in this way, everyday we wake up this side of the dirt is a gift and an experience. Keep the good experiences close to your heart. Learn from the negative experiences and then move on, re-playing them in your mind will prevent you from being happy. Negativity is like a treadmill, it will wear you out and get you nowhere! You deserve to be happy. If you wanted to make another attempt at that swim, millions will cheer you on! However it turns out you will always be a success as a person. OR you could go on to new dreams, who knows where they will take you! Thank-you for being open with your life and sharing it with us!

Reply



Leslie

October 3, 2011

Dear Diana,

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About this capture

I trained my heart out and raised funds to hike R2R2R in the Grand Canyon last week (the very same time you were going for your swim!) with the Project Athena

Foundation. Your story touches me deeply because I was completely prepared as well. I wanted to do this more than anything I could remember. I was blessed to receive amazing support from friends and family. I trained for months and my body was ready.

The first day I succumbed to heat exhaustion in the middle of the canyon and although I made it to the north rim after hiking for 15 hours darkness to darkness, I was unable to hike the next day and reach my round trip goal with the rest of the team due to how the heat affected me.

I was sad, disappointed, a bit embarrassed and could not believe it! Then I saw your swim and saw what had happened to you. I admired and followed your dream for a long time and I have such admiration for you...and I thought, if Diana can go for it like that, I cannot be disappointed in walking rim to rim of the Grand Canyon in ONE DAY!

Your dreams and determination helped me so much. We all face our humanity by stretching our limits and sometimes life brings things beyond our control. One thought kept popping into my head...sometimes we are not guaranteed the success we expect, but we can celebrate the success we unexpectedly receive! So thank you for being human, and for reaching high and for showing those of us that dreaming is important, no matter the outcome!

Dream on. I will too!

All the best, Leslie

Reply



Pete Habel

October 4, 2011

I sit here trying to think of some inspirational words, some quote I can find to lighten your heart about your most recent attempt at this swim. I'm drawing a blank. Then it dawns on me. Flashback to your first attempt at this swim... my family just lost our Mom, we were all hurting, noone knew what to say to one another we mainly sat in numbing silence. On the news at that time was a woman who was attempting to swim from Cuba to Florida, something happened, suddenly we were all talking, we were watching the news, we were anticipating this swim, we were on the phone with our friends talking about your upcoming swim, there was a flurry of activity. You took our minds off the very sad situation and lightened our heavy hearts. Over the years I thought about contacting you to tell you about what a huge impact you had on our family back in 1978. Now its 2011, this summer was filled with a local hurricane, an eastcoast earthquake and record flooding from Tropical Storm Lee, family members lost all thier belongings and some were literally homeless. After all gathering together and cleaning mud, dragging all our ruined belongings to the curb again we found ourselves sitting in numb silence, our brains overwrought with all the events we just went through. Then on the news comes a story about a 62 year old woman who was attempting a swim from Cuba to Florida and something happened, we all started talking, some of us thought back to 1978, we retold your story to our younger family members, you took our minds off what we are/were going through and once again lightened our heavy hearts! For this, I THANK YOU! I wish there was something I

can say to make you feel truly good about what you just attempted all I can say is that you brought so much relief to a family that was at thier lowest points, not once in our lifetimes BUT twice!!! There is a family in Pennsylvania that will carry you in our hearts and draw from your strength. Please know that through these years and through years not yet lived you will always be in our thoughts and prayers. If you ever find yourself in the Pocono Mtn's please know there is a place at our table for you, Diana Nyad.

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Reply



Susan Kay Gilbert

October 4, 2011

Diana: How wonderful of you to invite me to share my story! I am a life-long athlete, my second-most proud achievement being the finishing of a triathlon in Japan, even after having been flipped like a pancake, face first, onto the pavement, by a Japanese man, who cut me off with his bike, without even bothering to look back. Still, I endured the swim, bike and running portions to come in 35th out of 42 competitors, and the only American in this event.

My first proud achievement is thriving after cancer. When I look back at my life and the athletic events I have competed in (none of which I have won!) I feel victorious, because despite a genetic pre-disposition to cancer, I, like you, had a wonderful team—but in my case, a team of surgeons, who snatched me from the jaws of death and allowed me to contemplate a future again.

What am I doing, with these new years, for which I am eternally grateful? I sit—I meditate—I pray—and like you, I reflect. For me, staying here, grounding myself, being present in the moment is now much more important than climbing hills or swimming oceans. While I love those things too, I relish the solitude, the peace and the presence which affirms that I am alive. Staying here, and meditating creates in me a peaceful place that doesn't need to achieve, or excel or do something great, just to prove that I am alive, or seek affirmation of my value as a human being from anyone else.

I am here, and that is really good enough. My birthright is to just breathe, and I needn't prove anything to anyone anymore, in order to feel worthy of life. THAT is truly the gift for me—the nothingness that I allow myself, knowing that existing is the best prize of all.

Diana: I hope that in your reflections you will find a quiet, sweet spot of self-compassion for yourself, not only to affirm your greatness for trying your best to achieve this goal for yourself, but also, self-compassion for allowing yourself to simply "BE" from now on, and knowing that this is exactly your birthright—to be present and do nothing at all, and that just BEING is truly ENOUGH. Take care.

Susan

Reply



Síle

October 5, 2011

hi there,

i think everybody deals with a few big disappointments along the path of life. twice i tried to swim across a river near where i live [the dodder] and was not able to do it due to numerous setbacks, all of which were out 100% completely out of my control. it very much made me sad, and no one listened to my dream and helped me, but i decided to conquer a different river instead and was successful last

summer, and next year i am going to swim another one. so maybe this is my suggestion to you..why not instead refocus your challenge to a different body of water? the english channel seems like a very big challenge and is something one could be proud to achieve... why don't you try that? or have you already done it?

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take care

sile

Reply



Tracy

October 5, 2011

Try not to be discouraged. I live in Florida and I know the waters around here are full of sea creatures. Don't let the jellyfish keep you down.

When I am in need of encouragement, I read about gymnastics. Gymnasts get a lot of serious injuries (the type that would make me want to claim disability), but they don't let it stop them. Instead, they'll say things such as: "Well, I had surgery on my knee last week and I should be back in the gym in six weeks." Incredible!

Athletes just like you and the gymnasts keep the rest of us encouraged and I hope we can do the same for you. Press on. How about swimming off the coast of St. Croix? I have a friend from St. Croix and she said the waters there are very clear and you can see everything. If you swam there, at least you could see what you'd need to swim around!

Reply

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... is more than a swimmer.
... of hope to us all
that we can dream big, live life
large, and look back at all of it with
no regrets whatsoever."

- Kayaker Katie Leigh
- In My Own Words

- Diana reflects on her swim, 1 week later
- Navigator John Bartlett
- Wayne Lewin: Driver for Voyager I

- Tracy on Diana reflects on her swim, 1 week later

- swim, 1 week later
- Judy W on Kayaker Katie Leigh
- Susan Kay Gilbert on Diana reflects on her swim, 1 week later
- Nancy Curran on Kayaker Katie Leigh

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Xtreme Dream. For Diana Nyad's representation please contact Pam Derderian