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[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 - 1 Aug 2025



30



2010

2011

2025

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

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Home » Blog » When you Dream Big

## When you Dream Big

Posted by Xtreme Dream Team on Sep 27, 2011 in Blog, Slider | 50 comments



Photo: Christi Barli

The depth of emotions bursting through my heart, swirling around my brain right now, is frankly overwhelming.

Over the next few days, I'm going to try to break it all down.

When you Dream Big, as this Xtreme Dream drove me over the past two years, the intensity of focus took all my body, all my spirit. I thrived on the passion of the commitment. Each and every day, I had to dig down to find my best self. And I surrounded myself with a treasured Team who gave the same of themselves. We readied ourselves to the point that we stood on that Cuba shore this past Friday night,

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### Diana's Tweets



- Myself and my team try hard to keep you all updated. Missed anything? Check out the blog for lots of info, videos & updates <http://ow.ly/...> about 2 hours ago from HootSuite
- @rosementon Possibly, we shall see :) about 21 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to rosementon
- Would love to share with you all a tid-bit from Don "Woodkayaker" McCumber <http://ow.ly/6IKcY> The photos are just awesome! about 21 hours ago from HootSuite
- @internationalji Healing well with the support of my amazing team. Thank you about 21 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to InternationalJi
- @waynegilliam Did you enjoy the webinar? about 21 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to WayneGilliam

actually believing the once-daunting vision of swimming across this body of water was now firmly within our grasp.

I knew there would be suffering. It's inevitable. There would be hypothermia. And vomiting. And

## 12 captures

29 Sep. 2011 - 1 Aug. 2025

me for two years. That's the mind's eye photo that got me through every torturous training swim. I wanted to reach the destination so very badly and that desire is what took me on the deep and intense journey.

As is the case for many athletes, where will power supersedes normal physical limits, I was sure, absolutely sure, that no obstacle was keep me from getting there. Not sharks. I gathered an expert team on that front. Bonnie, my best friend and head handler, was well versed in every nuance of keeping my body strength up when the elements would start to tear it down. Our medical team was prepared for any emergency.

But a deadly jellyfish sting? Of the long list of hurdles I was willing to face, I can tell you that I did not sign up for the possibility of losing my life to one of these frightening stings. Nor did I imagine one of my crewmates dying on my behalf.

There is no sensationalizing here. I am quite pain tolerant. The sting from this Box Jellyfish, considered the most dangerous venom of all marine animals, taxes me in terms of describing it. Since I exited the water on Sunday morning just before noon, some 41 hours after starting from Cuba, I cannot get the haunting rip of pain off my body.

I am scarred with the tentacle marks from forearms to biceps to back to thighs. Honestly, it was as if a science fiction whisk flew across my body in perhaps less than a 1,000th of a second. The speed is too fast for mortal comprehension. The pain is excruciating. Intolerable. As if you have been held down in boiling oil. I gritted my teeth. I yelled out FIRE, FIRE, I'M ON FIRE!!

I tried to swim on. Every swimmer who has received a devastating jellyfish sting in the middle of a Dream event has stopped. There is no question. I went on. Minutes later, the paralysis of the respiratory system started. I felt the seizure of the thoracic area. Then the vomiting ensued.



Photo: Christi Barli

I was told by the independent observer on board, Steve Munatones, that the rules stated a swimmer facing a life-threatening emergency can exit the water and continue if under control again, but the swim would no longer be categorized as "non-stop" and have to be called "staged". Through the searing pain, I just couldn't let go of my "non-stop" world record dream.

AUG

SEP

NOV



30



2010

2011

2025

About this capture



Our 30-year-old EMT, Jonathan Rose, bravely jumped in to try to help me. In doing so, he was stung himself and immediately went into the same set of symptoms I was having. Bonnie was frightened for me and now really scared, as our Medical Team was not yet on the scene and our young EMT was struggling with his own survival. Jon's upper torso went into paralysis, too, and his breathing rate was in a dangerous 3 breaths a minute.

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 - 1 Aug 2025



Photo: Christi Barli

How could I have swim through that? The sting occurred before midnight and the two doctors from the University of Miami Sports Medicine Team didn't arrive on the scene until 5am. They began to administer steroid injections, oxygen, Epinephrine, everything they had to get me out of pain.

Almost 24 hours to the minute after that first devastating sting, the second hit. The same pain. The same paralysis. The convulsions again. The effects are cumulative. I was going down. This time I got out and went for the "staged" swim category. Others will write what dire emergency measure went on during that out of water time. I guess I was literally in a state of shock. My Teammates are going to file many stories of what they witnessed over the next couple of days. But when all the injections had been given, there was no question about my not going back in. The Dream was too powerful in my soul.

I never got to trip the mind fantastic in the long 50th, 55th, hour and go to meandering through the wonderings of the shape of the universe, the meaning of life. I never got to work my way through my Bob Dylan play list and my foreign language counting techniques. From the 2nd hour, I was in utter survival mode.

It's a microcosm of all our lives, though, isn't it? We plan for one scenario, one relationship, let's say, and a very different animal presents itself to us. And we survive. We maybe even thrive. Yes, I would have suffered, had I never been stung by one of these lethal jellyfish, not to mention two. But I must be proud of some inner courage that somehow, inexplicably, would not let me quit, even in the throes of catastrophic physical conditions.



Photo: Christi Barli

I am so terribly disappointed. No, those words don't suffice. I am crushed. I'm going to have some tough work ahead, to let go of this beautiful Dream of mine. Maybe you'll help me? I could use some wisdom right about now. I want to lead the way for all of us, to shoot for the stars, walk proud for all the passion we live as we chase our Dreams, and even in the end be big enough to accept an outcome that perhaps was not the Big Vision.

I may be crushed. But I'm also walking mighty tall. Nobody can ever, ever take away from me....or our Team....what we put into these two years. More on those positive life forces later. For today, I want to thank you for caring, all of you. There were evidently 1.3 million Twitter followers rooting for me on Sunday. There were 1.2 million people on Yahoo, searching for news of our progress. We were the #1 Google search item over the weekend. I know very well you were for the most part not swimming fans, nor even sports fans. You are people living your own lives of passion, wanting so much to chase your own inspirational dreams, dealing with your own lives' disappointments.

I look forward to the dialogues we're going to create together. Let's live heightened experiences. As we say here at the Xtreme Dream camp, as I now must say to my deepest inner self as I say to every one of you out there: ONWARD!!

With love and respect and compassion to all of you,

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29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

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2010 2011 2025

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## 50 Comments

**Cindy A.***September 27, 2011*

Well, you can always try again, but next time with a custom jelly-be-gone suit. Or swim between Alaska and Russia, or swim around the Hawaiian islands. There is a whole world out there, go and swim it first! You can't stop, it isn't in you.

Reply

**Cha Ron***September 27, 2011*

Just an NPR fan and a fellow athlete (of the slow and steady and less extreme and talented variety). You are an inspiration. Goals are delicious – they guide us, but there's something even more that we discover as we reach for them: That's that journey. Never the destination. Grieve a little – then get back out there.

Reply

**Beth R***September 27, 2011*

Diana, You are an INSPIRATION! I started working out and taking better care of myself as you trained for your big swim and was cheering you on the moment you hit the water! You had no control over the outcome of this HUMONGOUS adventure you took on and if I can give you any solace please know you ignited the "dreamer" in all of us!

Please do not stop being the amazing you that you are and if there is another swim for you take it on with all the passion you did this one! Heck...attempt to take this one on again and as the previous poster said...with a jelly fish safety suit!

Swim on!

Sincerely,

Beth R

Reply

**Laura Sutherland***September 27, 2011*

Diana, you have been my hero since I was in high school. Swimming was my way to get stronger and be a reason for the bullies to stay away. I wanted to be like you and long distance swimming got me hooked. And now, as I am a mere 10 years younger than you, you continue to inspire me. I know I can push through

my limitations, I know I can see it through. I do not see your 2 attempts as failures. I see them as tremendous milestones. You are amazing. I know it may seem like the Universe is telling you to stop. But baby, 3rd time is the charm. A couple of tweeks to the preventative measures, nets between boats? It's waiting for you. A we are all behind you, no matter what. Thank you for being the most amazing inspiration.

Reply



robert d

September 27, 2011

Hi Diana, I found an interesting article you might be interested in, in regards to Box Jellyfish being very scared of the color red.

<http://archives.starbulletin.com/2005/07/10/features/memminger.html>

It might be worth looking into and researching, and perhaps investing in a bright red swim suit ^^

Thank you

Reply



Carol Moore

September 27, 2011

Diana, you are courageous and so very special we cannot imagine the intensity of the feeling which you faced during the swim. Keep rolling and we'll keep rolling with you. YOU are my Forrest Gump!

Reply



Omar Tinoco

September 27, 2011

Swim, Swim, swim... Don't Give Up! Please Don't...

Reply



Jane

September 27, 2011

Diana do not be disappointed you have failed at NOTHING. I can swim only a kilometre a day, so far, and not non stop, but because of you I can do that much and will do more. Be the best you can you taught me that. Thank you.

Reply



Mattison Grey

September 27, 2011

Diana,

This is totally out of character for me to say what I am about to say, but having been inspired completely by you going for your life, I am going for it.

In your post you said "Maybe you'll help me? I could use some wisdom right about now" I can help you. I am sure of it. I don't know any of the answers, but I know exactly the questions to ask. That is where I suggest you start – not with the answers or the results, but with the questions. If you want help with those

questions, all you have to do is ask me. Helping you and other amazing athletes is one of my Xtreme dreams and I am all in.

Reply

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

AUG

SEP

NOV



30



2010

2011

2025

About this capture



woosterburd

September 27, 2011

I had NO idea it was a BOX Jelly fish... I thought it was a Man-o-War... You are lucky to be alive, as well as your crew member.... Be well, Stay Strong.....

Reply



TNTriathlete

September 27, 2011

It was a Man O' War. Box jellyfish are only found in the Pacific. I'm not sure why Diana keeps insisting it was a box jellyfish.

Reply



Deirdre Rose

September 27, 2011

Actually, box jellies are found in every ocean. I thought at first that they were only in the Pacific but that's not so. The worst of them all, are found near Australia, the next worst are around the Hawaiian islands, and there are approx. 30 species that are found in the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Florida Straits.

Reply



Katie Oglesby

September 27, 2011

Yes, it would have been a dream come true if you made it to the Florida shore, but it would have been a nightmare for the rest of us if we had lost you. Of course, you can always try again. And again. And again. You DO have an amazing support network. To me, though, you have nothing to prove, Diana. I feel your disappointment. I also feel your confidence. Let the confidence shine brighter.

Reply



Jacques Morgan

September 27, 2011

Please pardon the bluntness of my expression of appreciation but you are BADASS..... I have had great pleasure in introducing you to as many people as I could as I would encounter in my daily life, especially those whom I have such pleasure in training on a daily basis. One of my clients emailed me the other day to say you are an inspiration to her and went on to call you a Rock Star. Indeed you are a BADASS ROCK STAR!

Thank you so much,

Jacques

Reply

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

Diane

September 27, 2011

No doubt in my mind that you would have made it. Acts of Nature had other plans.

You're still an inspiration to me and many people I know. Thank you, Diana.

Reply

AUG

SEP

NOV



30



2010

2011

2025

About this capture



Karen

September 27, 2011

Your heart will lead you to your next steps. For my part, I have to believe that someone out there who followed your journey this weekend—someone with the engineering, marine, or just creative skills—will come up with a way for your to swim this without fear of those jellyfish. 30 years ago no one would have thought you could swim without the shark cage, but this year you did. Perhaps by this time next year, someone with greater resources than I have will have come up with a way to keep those nasty buggers away from you.

For now I can only tell you that you make me proud to be a woman. Proud to be middle aged. Proud to be human, in fact. Even if you never swim another stroke, that will never go away. I have been impressed and excited by other athletes, but I have never been moved the way you and your journey have moved me. Thank you for that, Diana. I will be waiting (with more than a million others) to hear what you will take on next.

Reply



Ginny

September 27, 2011

Diana I met you many years ago at a swim meet and was struck then by your composure and strength. Those qualities have only multiplied. A good friend is fighting the battle of his life against MS...and winning! He just completed his first triathlon against all odds. He has formed a non-profit: Team Inspiration Texas (look for it on Facebook) to support others who will not quit. You both have that ability to inspire and encourage. Thank you.

Reply



Amy Gooch

September 27, 2011

" Maybe you can help me?" I'll answer that with a quote I see every single day:

" The purpose of life is a life of purpose" – Robert Byrne

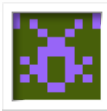
So you didn't finish what you set out to do. Ok, fair enough. But lets see what you DID do.

You inspired a stranger, someone you had never even thought of to do her own impossible. To join a fitness challenge at the gym. To face a certified personal trainer, to be the largest one in the group, to do things she never thought possible. To push herself as you did- as she did reps, squats, laps, miles over and over....she did it all, while thinking of you as her leader, her inspiration, and her guide. She watched you on your journeys, she was there with you in spirit. Now that your journey is over, and her fitness challenge is almost over, now what? We

keep going. Yes, I'm talking of what you did for me, ONE person out of millions. Because of you, I'm winning my fitness challenge at my gym. Because of you, I've endured pain like you wouldn't believe (okay, maybe you would) and I've kept going. How many times have I asked myself 'would Diana quit?' always the same...no! Because of you, I'm going to keep going- the challenge at the gym is almost over, but I'm not. Not by a long shot. You've inspired me like no one else...

And I'm only ONE person. How many millions are watching you, being inspired to be the best person they can be, to improve any and all aspects of their lives? I've read some comments, about people doing their own challenge, their own impossible because you've inspired them. So perhaps your purpose in life was not swim the miles you hoped for but just to simply be an incredible role model~ when our world seems to be lacking in those. You didn't do this because you were paid millions of dollars, you didn't do this because it made you popular, got you into Hollywood parties, or made you a political candidate. You did it because it's in your heart and soul, and because you were simply meant to be an inspiration to the world, who desperately needs someone amazing to look up to. Be exceptionally proud of that! You've made a mark on the world like no other...

Reply



Katie

September 28, 2011

I couldn't have said it better so I didn't even try. Thank you Diana for being an inspiration, a wonderful role model and incredible woman! Keep reaching for the stars!

Reply



Doreen

September 27, 2011

I once had a dream...nothing as seemingly unattainable as yours, but one just as important to me, something easily accomplished by most women, but something that just wasn't meant to be for me. It sometimes still hurts that I never saw this dream come true but over time I've realized it just didn't come true in the way I imagined. The fact is, I immediately become fast friends with every child I meet. I'm the one that parents say, "Oh, look at that, little [insert name here] never likes anyone!" Diana, what you have done has done more than any record could ever do. You have inspired MILLIONS of people. Think about that. You have changed people forever with your spirit, your determination, your courage. That is so much more valuable and amazing than any world record could ever be.

Reply



Radu

September 27, 2011

If anybody will ever complete this swim, he or she will complete "The Diana Nyad Swim". It's yours, and I think you've proven that you can do it.

Sure, a finish in Florida would have been nicer, but you've still taught a lot of people what willpower can do. We can only imagine what you've been through, without adding the years spent training and the suffering you've endured to complete this swim.

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 - 1 Aug 2025

It's yours, you got there, and you got to millions of people. It was more than human. Keep doing what you love. If only people would start gaining control of their life...

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

Glad to see you posting again.

AUG

SEP

NOV

2010

30

2011

2025



About this capture

Reply



Collen Fales

September 27, 2011

Diana- I keep reading to try again and I understand what people are saying but in my mind there is no need to get to the shore as you did everything in your power to swim this dream and circumstances just didn't allow it but to me that doesn't matter . You more than succeeded . you inspired over 1 million people. I have said this before you have helped me in my struggle with anxiety (nothing to do with sports, goals, ect.. and for the record have never been a sports fan. You have changed my life. I say grieve and then keep reaching out talking to people and inspire people just as you have inspired me. Keep dreaming new dreams while taking a much deserved vacation 😊 . you are my hero and if you do deiced to tour around I can't wait to meet you! Colleen Fales Maynard Ma

Reply



Stacey

September 27, 2011

I'm a swimmer, and have been following your journey in utter amazement – you're an inspiration to millions of people, men and women, swimmers and non-swimmers and everyone in between. I've been training this summer for my first triathlons, and our team has used your example to motivate us all in our own work – to raise thousands of dollars for cancer research and complete our own endurance events. I think the thing for you to know is that while you may not have completed your Dream in this moment, you have motivated literally millions of people to pursue their own Dreams. That's an amazing accomplishment, no matter when you got out of the water! Keep on rocking it, you incredible woman!!

Reply



Laura

September 27, 2011

I don't think you have to do this swim again. You were already successful, like you said when you ended the swim., you changed the finish line. What was the swim about anyway? Was it really about getting from point A to point B. It was about creating a challenge, giving everything to work towards that challenge, and facing that challenge. You not only smashed the challenge you rallied a million people towards a common goal while doing it. So now, onward means creating another challenge, giving everything to meet that challenge, and facing the challenge. Congratulations on your successful swim!

Who holds the world record for being stung by 3 box jellyfish and continuing to swim for 30 hours or so? Just saying....

With much respect and admiration, Laura

Reply



Sherree

September 27, 2011

Diana, you are an inspiration to me and to many, many others.

You have asked us to be courageous, to take a risk, to try. These are things you have done yourself. You have succeeded in inspiring us to "reach beyond their grasp."

I know you tried to get past the asthma attack in August and the pain/sickness from the jellyfish this weekend. The fact that you took that risk and tried at all, to me, is priceless. It takes courage and grace to admit that forces beyond your control have sidelined your dream...for now.

Somehow, I get the feeling this is just a rest stop – to catch your breath and heal. You are an inspiration to millions. We will swim each mile with you and will be with you on the coast of Florida when you reach it next time, and we will dance the happy dance of joy together!

~S.

Reply

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

AUG

SEP

NOV



30



2010

2011

2025



About this capture



Darisse Smith

September 27, 2011

I'll keep this as short as I can; I just hope that by sharing my small story will give you some help in overcoming the emotional trauma of not achieving your goal (though you damn sure have nothing to be ashamed of). I spent 7 years in the U.S. Army as an officer and helicopter pilot. My dream was to become a Company Commander in a OH 58D "Kiowa Warrior" helicopter company and to lead my Soldiers in combat. Just on the verge of being given this opportunity, I was sent to Northern Iraq to work with 11 U.S. Soldiers and 3000 Korean Soldiers as we built hospitals and schools for the Kurds living there. I didn't fly my whole time there and I suffered a career-ending back injury. For me, not to have the opportunity to fulfill this dream of mine, what I considered to be the epitome of an Army experience, was a severe disappointment. I spent 5 years finding answers to my back injury and the ensuing pain it created. Eventually I discovered that I have a different calling than I ever dreamed of: to encourage and motivate chronic pain sufferers everywhere who have had to give up their life dreams in search of an answer for their pain. I would have never imagined my life to be this way, but now I would have it no other way. Now I can impact a greater amount of people than ever before! I am using open water swimming as a platform to reach as many people as I can (for swimming is undoubtedly a lifelong, sustainable sport). Let yourself go through the emotional turmoil that will ensue because I know you are disappointed in not reaching that other shore. Just keep in mind that life might have an even greater outcome and purpose in store for you! Never forget the millions of people you will continue to inspire for years to come!

Reply



Vicki

September 27, 2011

Great post, Diana. I am a 56 year old runner and you ARE my leader! I know the only thing harder for me than suffering through the end of some marathons I've run is deciding not to.. to DNF. I think you overly pushed the envelope and I am glad that you are still here with us!!

If there is no way to detour the jellyfish then I hope you can find another extreme dream. Onward!

Reply

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

AUG

SEP

NOV



30

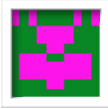


2010

2011

2025

About this capture



Mary Stan

September 27, 2011

People have shared so much wisdom already and we're all here to help. I think you know the path ahead. Feeling the crushing pain of disappointment is paramount. Don't fight any experience, but try to stay out of the entrapment of 'what if's' Be in this moment with whatever it is and the path will unfold one breath at a time. You will experience the new scenario as it happens. It's just that none of us know what it is right now and that's unpleasant.

You are not alone in whatever you go through. Your flesh and blood team and your virtual team are always here. I know you have moved into my heart and I carry your teachings each day.

Reply



Kori

September 27, 2011

"Reach high, for stars lie hidden in your soul. Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal."

– Pamela Vault Starr

Diana, you dug deep and went for your Xstream Dream. Did you get there? Yes, I believe you did. We all believe you did. You have to ask yourself: What really was my Xstream Dream? To crawl up on the shores of Key West? Or was it really the two years of preparation and the attempt...the journey along the way? You brought us all on your journey and we cheered you on in your victories, were awed and inspired at your strength and determination, and felt your pain in your disappointments, but you never, ever let us down. You ALWAYS got back on that horse!! I know you wanted so so bad to crawl up on that shore. Go there, walk barefoot in the sand and be at peace with it. Smile and remind yourself of what you've learned and accomplished on your journey and feel the love & support you have from your amazing team and us groupies. It's hard to let it go and someday you can, but for now, find your peace and as your camp says, ONWARD!!! and we all will be waiting to hear what's around the next bend for you...we know you'll go all Nyad on it! 😊 Thank you for the awesome journey.

With much admiration,

Kori, a fellow athlete

Reply



Dorothy

September 27, 2011

Diana, You became my personal inspirational coach 30 years ago. Today I enjoy a state of health and well-being that few people my age can imagine thanks to you. We may never meet in person, but you have truly made all the difference in my attitude, health, and self-confidence. Now I finally have a full time career in health and wellness, hoping to inspire others as you inspired me. Many blessings. Dorothy Miller.

Reply

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

Donna

Dear Diana

September 27, 2011

AUG

SEP

NOV

30

2010

2011

2025

About this capture



I don't know if you will ever really know the inspiration you have ignited. Your courage, compassion, fight and ferocious attempt at an extreme dream raises all of us. I know the outcome is nothing like what you expected, but for all of us who are witnesses, there is no going back to before you swam. Thank you for being the visionary roman candle torch that you are! You have made an enormous difference!

Reply



Jennifer

September 27, 2011

It's quality not quantity that matters...you performed a quality swim and your new motto should be "live proud"

Reply



bel

September 27, 2011

Diana, its incredible to read, see and experience your passion, determination and inspiration. Something exceptional, for sure. As you asked for a dialogue, here is my pov: one of the most difficult things to do is to live in the present moment, to strive for the best in the present moment, to stay in it, never to let your mind go to the future – that does not exist – or the past – that its gone. But even more difficult is to live in the present moment, do the best you can in order to achieve your goal, but let go of the attachment of achieving the goal. That is beyond words! Maybe that is what was in it for you. If that resonates, you know where to find me to continue the conversation. with love – bel p.

Reply



Kim Davis

September 27, 2011

Dear Diana, I follow a lot of athletes on twitter or facebook, some I used to because of their self-centered attitudes towards their accomplishments. You, on the other hand have to be the classiest extreme athlete ever! Your passion is contagious, you inspire regardless... thank you for sharing your dream.

Reply



Pauline

September 27, 2011

Oh, Diana- only YOU can decide IF and WHEN you are ready to say goodbye to a dream. You are amazing, no matter what your future holds. So many family members and (so-called) friends have told me I should give up and let go of my dream, but I simply cannot give up on something that I have been longing for and reaching for and aspiring for throughout my entire life– something that I feel is my destiny. I would hope that my God would not instill such a strong passion in me

for something that I am not able to attain. I am not most people, and NO ONE other than me can decide what is right for me, nor does anyone know what my heart OR my future holds. You have faced so many hardships and challenges that "normal" people would have simply walked away from. You have defied death multiple times. But NO ONE knows what the future holds, and NO ONE should be telling you what is right for you. This is YOUR dream — only YOU decide when or if you can say goodbye to it. Just know that you are an inspiration to all of us, and we support you in whatever you do! 😊

[Reply](#)

## Barbara Edwards

September 27, 2011

My Dear Diana, I am your age and understand and support every little thing i have heard you say or write. The focus of course has been on your incredible undisputed athletic prowess. After this swim i am humbled by the thought that you could put aside your drive and motivation to finish the swim and put the welfare of the members of your team first, as it appears that is what you did- How often in history has such a grand athlete been such a grand person? I can't answer that question of course but the concept remains—no matter how crushed you feel, i know you would never have wanted another to suffer because of your Dream- the crush will evolve into other feelings of pride and selflessness, all by itself- the feeling in my heart for you right now is very strong, as we all know you could have finished that swim and that you chose not to- Onwards to the next phase of a grand life, lived boldly with all of us here for you at any moment- You and Bonnie are very lucky to have each other as best friends- my best to you both-

[Reply](#)

## Karen

September 27, 2011

Even without reaching the other shore.. you have sooo far surpassed the unimaginable. What you HAVE accomplished in this journey, is beyond phenomenal. Who in the world would have enough guts to even contemplate such a journey let alone try and try again, and again. What you have accomplished HAS and WILL CONTINUE TO inspire and stay with so many people as an amazing feat of courage they will never forget.

Life is far too precious to waste even a second of it in pointless & empty regret. What you have accomplished IS cause for celebration!!! I say pop the campaign bottles and celebrate the incredible journey, support, friendships, determination and passion that went into it!

Everyone is still so AMAZED by you! You have not lost a single fan, rather you have gained MILLIONS around the world. Be proud Diana! YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A BADASS and no one can take that away from you!!!

Celebrate!!! Making now amazing and joyful matters more than anything. ONWARD is right!!! 😊

Thanks for the inspiration Diana!

Your fan always!

Karen

[Reply](#)

Jean S.

September 27, 2011

I am just glad that you are safe and alive. Why not just take a break and let your mind relax for awhile? Perhaps you need to refuel your brain and soul with some

calmness and serenity and just get your second wind. You deserve to breathe, let go and enjoy. My best to you for whatever comes next.

Jean

Reply



Na'ama

September 27, 2011

Dear Diana, maybe the help you seek from others now is the reflection of your light and courage that helped light the way for others through their bearing witness to your tenacity and indomitable spirit. You impact people indelibly. That is no small feat, nor a mundane kind of life-journey.

Whatever the form the 'what now' shall take—and it may or may not involve long distance swimming—it would be a natural extension of the tapestry of life you've already woven: of hope, of determination, of dreaming-into-action, of working harder than one thinks and then some and not losing sight of what matters, of living life for a purpose... Of making the most you can from the most you have been given at a given time.

Maybe what feels like needing help is in part a need for being comforted but also seen and understood—that it might help if we really GOT it just how heartbreaking this is for you, even as we also hold the reality of your strength and that you will get through this. The fact you are not falling apart doesn't mean this is not devastating for you...it means that you are continuing to live even as you grieve, and that you are intent on finding meaning (and if need be making meaning, weaving meaning, seeding meaning) in all this.

We're here.

All of us who cheer for you—in and out of the water, in pain or triumph, in preparation or reprieve, in times of bewilderment or clarity.

Take good and precious care of you... Whatever the plan is, it will be revealed.

And it will be alright...

Reply



Marcos Díaz Galarza (Puerto Rico)

September 28, 2011

After being swimming for 40hrs at the sea, you've been stung by 2 BoxJellyFish and survive! After that, your spirit wanted to continue but your life was at risk. And you have a doubt about your accomplishment??!! This was a test of physical and mental endurance, not a suicidal march at sea. You've taught a very good and important lesson to all of us...And I will think and live with it all of the rest of my life... THANKS!!!

¡Eres tremenda inspiración!

PS: To make this journey you had to let that dream possess you. As you took your dream so deep inside, you may be seeing this life-threatening jellyfish attack as a failure. Don't! In time you will realize the real measure of your success.

Reply

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

Lindy Binns

Your message

September 28, 2011

AUG

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30



2010

2011

2025

About this capture



Diana,

Of course, I have been following you, and with you in spirit as you again and again have made noble attempts.

I only know some of what you feel through one of my own personal un-met challenges. I had to begin to imagine that I was hanging onto the tether of a hot air balloon. While it is so hard for me to NOT hang on and keep trying in my attempt to hold it down and not let it fly away, at some point I had to realize that there was simply no way that I could keep that balloon on the ground. Too if I continue to try and hang on too long to the line, I will very likely be killed. I do know the feeling. Not unlike the effort to climb Everest when the elements on that given day can overcome even the most determined and the finest of the fit.

You are fine. You are great — still, as you are today. You took it on.

Lindy

Reply



Lyndon Effinger

September 28, 2011

Dear, dear Diana,

I am not an avid athlete nor am I a super heroine undertaking world records in life but, nonetheless I can relate to you on sooo many levels. I relate to your life's search for perfection and am reminded of Richard Bach's wonderful tale of Jonathan Livingston Seagull. There is a part in the book where Jonathan is talking to Chiang, the Elder. "Chiang, this world isn't heaven at all, is it?" "Is there no such place as heaven?" "No, Jonathan, there is no such place. Heaven is not a place, and it is not a time. Heaven is being perfect."

Such is obviously your nature, as I know it is mine. Despite our varied interests and quests in life, I feel there are many parallels between us. More than anything Diana, I relate to the anguish that you are now feeling, the angst and torment over having your life's dream shredded by forces out of your control. I empathize completely with the pain of your jellyfish stings ... a pain so hideous as to defy explanation. I have cried as I have followed your story and wept with you and for you when you were forced to abandon the waters. While I feel small and humbled in comparison to you, I can't help but feel a kindred spirit on an emotional and spiritual level.

I am the same age as you and a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. My career was as a nurse and nurse educator. My life has always been rich and full, made so by my passion, creativity, love and intrigue for everything I have ever undertaken. To be THE best wife, mother, nurse...grandmother were my life's goals. I have often thought that if there were Guinness records for the amount of time spent actively loving, learning, giving hugs, kisses and encouragement, I would hold them all ! My future dreams were a culmination of all the preparation that went into decades of loving life with intention and purpose. Little did I know, that my life's greatest challenge lay in front of me.

My own proverbial "jellyfish sting" came six years ago when a surgeon's act of

carelessness severed the tendons and ligaments holding my neck muscles to the cervical spine. What was supposed to be a simple 45 minute laminectomy turned into a 6 hour ordeal with no mention in the operative report as to WHAT exactly transpired. Instantly, my neck went into severe and torturous spasms which over time have progressed and cascaded throughout my body.

In the initial aftermath, I sought out every medical and alternative modality I could find determined to regain "my old self ".After years of affirmation that it would never improve, I now struggle daily to engage in every form of distraction possible to keep me from focusing on the hurt and drowning in not only my pain but the sadness that accompanies it. As the weakness in my neck ensues and the muscle fibers that were shorter than the spasms have started to atrophy, the pain has taken on a life of its' own.... searing, knifelike , burning, twisting and writhing .At times , it is so intense that it completely envelopes me and I have no choice but submit to its tyranny and pray for God's grace. I try not to perceive it or the spasms as the enemy as both are, after all, merely my body's attempt to compensate for the irreversible damage that has been done. What is most difficult for me is the knowingness that I will never get a break from it... I will live the rest of my life as it is now...if not worse. I am in no way trying to be whiney, it is just a fact which I despise just as you surely despised having to come out of the water. When you said to your supporters that perhaps we could help you now, I, again totally related. Daily, I look for a simple thought to think, sources of inspiration or undaunting courage...something to give me peace and gentleness within the agony and then one day I came upon your journey. I thank you for ALL that this remarkable feat has given us ...your fans. I know that from my own perspective, our best made plans may not always reach fruition. I believe that is because our soul's journey has a different purpose. Perhaps that purpose is known to us... perhaps not but if , in any way, our life's journey can have a positive impact and help another along their path, then we have truly lived and succeeded.

To end this, I will again quote Jonathan Livingston Seagull as he spoke with an Elder. " Heaven is perfection", the Elder said." You will begin to touch heaven, Jonathan, in the moment that you touch perfect speed. And that isn't flying a thousand miles an hour, or a million, or flying at the speed of light. Because ANY number is a limit, and perfection doesn't have limits. Perfect speed, my son, is being there."

Congratulations on attaining true perfection Diana and, again, thank you for sharing your dream with all it's nuances . You are amazingly beautiful !!

With warm regards, Lyndon Effinger

Reply



DONIELLE

September 28, 2011

Dear Diana-

I always tell my children that one can't coach desire. You either have the determination and guts, or you don't. I believe you showed more guts and determination than I have ever had the privledge to see. Thank you! I am married to a professional cyclist, so this is saying alot! I am in awe of your dedication. I often ask my husband when he will be finished racing...he has no answer for me. Initially he said he had a finite time to do something in this sport. You are his proof that age is not a determining factor in achieving excellence within a sport. You are an inspiration to the deepest part of my soul. Prefontaine said," To give anything but your best, is a waste of the gift." You have exceeded your best and given us a

gift. Thank you for your passion, for allowing us a glimpse of the love you have for swimming. It is truly a gift you have given to all of us!

Reply

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

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2010 2011 2025



About this capture



## Swimming Vacation

September 28, 2011

Dear Diana. Again a huge congratulation on your achievement. We've been following you from day one. Thanks a lot for sharing your dream with us and inspiring us to follow our dreams. Most of us have problems achieving our dreams and individuals as you, give us new hope. Stay well, recover asap and get back to what you enjoying doing the most, if swimming, then enjoy in the water, hopefully without man or war stings. Good luck.

Reply



## Shirley miller

September 28, 2011

Dearest Diana,

Again, I thank you for sharing your life with whoever has been blessed to be near to you in some way. Your inspiration is without measure. Now you have asked for help and wisdom in facing these days.

I offer you what has blessed me and transformed me in many ways. I have encountered an Indian mystic, Osho, who has been my guru to my inner being as you have been my physical guru since I trusted your guidance back when I was around thirty. I am your age, 62.

Osho has many, many books, and any one will help you spiritually.

I think most of us can tell stories of our dreams shattering, and in ways we could never have imagined! I have almost no dreaming left in me, I just try to experience the reality. I try to be in it, without any plan or goal. It takes not practice or training but coming back again and again to this me, this now, this place, this helplessness, this fear, this small me.

Some Osho words for all of us, Diana:

Every day, boats sink and castles tumble. ....who ever has his dreams fulfilled?

All dreams ultimately bring misery because, even if the paper boats sail, how far can they go?

The dreams are not in error: dreams are naturally unrealizable. It is we who are at fault: dreaming, we are asleep; sleeping we can achieve nothing.

"Instead of seeing dreams, see the truth. See that which is. .. This boat alone is real. This boat alone will carry you to the ultimate fulfillment of your life. "

Diana, I hope we have all helped in some way. We can't give you back enough!!

The comment by Lyndon Effinger is just touching and heart- warming. May we all put our arms of love around her !!!

Many blessings to all who come here and to you, Diana Nyad!!

Shirley Miller

Reply



## Lynda

September 28, 2011

Diana, You embody the spirit of this: "I don't believe people are looking for the meaning of life as much as they are looking for the experience of being alive."—

Joseph Campbell

You may have fallen short of your intended goal, but I have no doubt you LIVED the experience in it's entirety. The lessons of your swim will continue to unfold for us all. Thank you for taking to the sea to push us all forward. Well done, well done indeed.

[12 captures](#)

29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

Reply



Johnson

September 28, 2011

Diana,

Why don't you finish up the work you left from not completing the English Channel in three separate attempts? While you say that you are now in the best shape ever, if you couldn't swim the English Channel in your prime years, then how about now? Maybe you are too soft now to withstand the colder water and current challenges.

Reply



Glorianne

September 29, 2011

Maybe this will help..."If you aspire to the highest place, it is no disgrace to stop at the second or even the third place." Cicero 106-43 BC Roman orator, statesman and essayist

Love and hope!

Reply



Elle

September 29, 2011

Hey Diana! I love swimming in Lake Michigan...it gets up to ~75 degrees in the summer. And no sharks, critters or salt! How about swimming 103 miles in a Great Lake?

Reply



Dee Dee

September 29, 2011

"I may be crushed. But I'm also walking mighty tall. Nobody can ever, ever take away from me....or our Team..."

This is just such a testament to how big your heart is and how much you have inspired so many of us, including those closest to you.

So I know that for myself, I thank you for letting us all be a part of your journey. Can't wait to see what you decide you want to do next.

Reply

## Leave a Comment

Name

Mail (will not be published)

Website

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29 Sep 2011 – 1 Aug 2025

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▼ About this capture



Your message...

Submit

## Diana Nyad's Xtreme Dream

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

## Recent Posts

- Don "Woodkayaker" McCumber
- Bonnie's Reflections
- Thoughts From Independent Observer Steven Munatones
- When you Dream Big
- the most venomous marine animal known

## Recent Comments

- Kavil Musikasinthorn on the most venomous marine animal known
- elivela67 on Thoughts From Independent Observer Steven Munatones
- Karen Ratts on Bonnie's Reflections
- Don McCumber on Don "Woodkayaker" McCumber
- Neil van der Byl on Don "Woodkayaker" McCumber

## Archives

- September 2011 (42)
- August 2011 (36)
- July 2011 (20)
- June 2011 (11)
- May 2011 (15)
- April 2011 (4)
- March 2011 (2)
- February 2011 (1)
- January 2011 (2)
- October 2010 (3)
- September 2010 (7)
- August 2010 (14)
- July 2010 (13)

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