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

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## Inspirational Email to Diana

Posted by Diana Nyad on Feb 14, 2011 in Blog | 1 comment



Dear Diana,

I have been following your training for swimming to Cuba and I am so excited for you. I also enjoy the Bravabody website and follow you on Facebook. I have seen several times that you encourage those of us women over 50 to share our stories with you and I would like to share mine. Ten years ago this September I had gastric bypass surgery. I weighed 400 lbs. and was dying....diabetic, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetic sores on my right leg. Over the past ten years, I have had alot of complications from that surgery which have resulted in my having had 9 abdominal surgeries, 3 in the past three years. HOWEVER, I have lost and KEPT OFF 250!!! I am now 57 years old and am in the best shape of my life. During my medical adventures, I discovered swimming, which I had not done since I was a child. For the past 4 or 5 years, I swim 3 – 4 days a week. Currently, I'm swimming 3 days a week....2 days 1.25 miles before I go to work and on Saturday I swim 2 miles as I am planning to swim the LowCountry Splash in Charleston, South Carolina this Memorial Day weekend. On the 3 other days that I don't swim, I jog on the treadmill 3 miles and will soon be learning to play raquetball. I have a trainer that I work with off and on, and last week I had him measure my body fat which I am tickled to death about – 17.5%.

I work hard every single day to be the absolute best! It truly amazes me what my body can do and how much I love to swim. It has rescued me from some truly rough spots. It's what help me come back

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### Diana's Tweets



- [@brkfastattiffys](#) Thanks so much for the follow back.. make sure to check out my facebook page! <http://t.co/nf0JK8HG> about 18 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to BrkfastAtTiffys
- [@janetober](#) Don't let anything stand in the way of your dreams- courage is never stopping!! about 18 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to JanetOber
- [@slatefree1](#) I'm happy to have followers! The next adventure is whatever jumps out at me next in life. about 18 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to Slatefree1
- [@mezzoring](#) I couldn't agree more, we need to lean to preserve the earth and all of the creatures that come with it! about 18 hours ago from HootSuitein reply to mezzoring

after each one of those surgeries.

Thank you for being such a good role model and for all that you do to promote a healthy, strong image

for older women. I have found something that I like to keep in mind The strength is in my body. I have

the power.

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Thank You!!! And good luck!!!!

Lee Irene Sullivan

Columbia, South Carolina

Dear Lee,

My best friend/partner in BravaBody/head handler on my Swim is Bonnie Stoll.

Bonnie and I sat together and read your inspiring note FOUR TIMES. You are a shining embodiment of what it means to commit oneself to life. You chose to live a vibrant, strong, fruitful life, instead of throwing it all down the drain. And it wasn't the bypass surgery that was your courageous move. As you say, that led to many, many complications and the hardship of multiple surgeries. What you have chosen is to enjoy the movement your body was born to do. You've decided to get high on the endorphins that flow through your blood stream with every lap of the pool, every step you run.

I'm sure you know that millions of us, and Bonnie and I will include ourselves in that number, know too well the misuse of food to handle life's pain, sorrows, disappointments, and loneliness. But how many, once traveling that self-destructive road to an extreme measure, as you did, Lee, find the strength and the heart to choose life instead? It's rare and we are misty-eyed to hear your "voice" in this note of yours.

Life is a brilliant treasure. And it's fleeting. We blink and we're 40, Blink again, we're 60. One more blink and we're into the golden years of old age.

You showed up for yourself. You decided not to let this incredible life of yours pass you by. You have embraced being your best. What more can any of us do? You've done it, Lee, and we hope many individuals who could use your story to help them make their own positive choices read your powerful words here. Congratulations (17% body fat...now that's downright AWESOME!!!!) on your happy body.....and your gutsy spirit, Lee. We are now your biggest fans!

ONWARD!

diana and Bonnie



- [@erica\\_reed](#) Thanks, we're excited too!  
about 18 hours ago from HootSuitein  
[reply to erica\\_reed](#)

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## One Comment



Jana Paley

July 20, 2011

Dear Diana and Bonnie,

Wishing you all the best...your commitment inspires me every day and I can tell you, I have needed it. I don't think you or Bonnie know that I was in a plane crash in November. Once again, I limped away from a disaster, but with a new set of problems—broken ankle, torn up shoulder, and 1/3 loss of vision in my left eye that is permanent. When I got home from the hospital, I went back to the original set of exercises you developed for me the very first time we discussed my medical situation and my great desire to continue my athletic life. With a leg in a cast and an arm in a sling, I modified the exercises—like Tim Gunn would say, "Make it Work." On Jan 17, the cast came off and before it started to swell I went straight to the custom boot fitter in Sun Valley and with my shiny new boots and a great looking outfit and no poles, I took a no stop top to bottom run on one of the

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longest vertical trails in the US. Can't say I wasn't scared, can't say I wasn't  
breathless, can't say I did it with my natural zeal, but the thing is that I did it! I  
skied another 51 days even though I had a planned surgery in March that took me  
off the slopes for two weeks. The day before I left for the surgery, I heli skied in  
one of the greatest back country areas The Pioneer Mountains have to offer—full  
day, perfect tracks, so much fun!

Without the original workout you both designed for me and made me stick with,  
getting back on skis would have been merely dreaming the impossible dream.  
Actually, in part, you made my 51 ski days possible.

Diana, I wish you all the best with the SWIM—wish I could be there to see it! Just  
start those strokes and don't look back.

All My Best,  
Jana Susan Paley

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a is more than a swimmer.  
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."

- Shark
- Roz Savage Part 4
- Roz Savage Part 3
- Roz Savage Part 2
- Kathy Loretta

- Joanne on Shark
- Laura B. on Kathy Loretta
- Bruckner Chase on Shark
- Kajon on Shark
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Xtreme Dream. For Diana Nyad's representation please contact Pam Derderian