

English 12

Long

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The Audacious Chap, Sir Edmund Hillary

“It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.” These powerful words were muttered through the humble lips of Sir Edmund Hillary, a man who has changed the world. On July 20, 1953 a man who would change history entered the world. Edmund Hillary showed the world's people not to be afraid of their dreams, and to chase after them; and once they have reached those goals, to set yet another to pursue, but through it all, to remember to stay humble.

Edmund Hillary was born and raised in Auckland, New Zealand (Edmund Hillary Biography). He was raised under his parent's strict rule because they wanted him to grow to be a respectable boy. Hillary was advanced in school and because of this, he did not have a lot of free time during the school week to do anything but school work; however, on the weekends, Hillary spent a great deal of time outside and exploring, and looking out to the mountains that surrounded his home. From his adventures outside, he saw the brilliant, marvelous sight of Mt Ralapehu, which struck a match and started a blazing fire that would later inspire Sir Edmund Hillary's adventures. As a teen, Hillary's father took up beekeeping as a full time business and hand his son's, Hillary included, working for him. Later in life, Hillary stated that he believed he got his competitive drive from when he and his brother would race to drop off 80 pound boxes of honey and from there, that drove him to be successful later in life(Sir Edmund Hillary Interview). After enlisting in the War, Edmund Hillary became very interested in climbing

mountains and once the war was over, he took it up as a full time hobby and that is where his story really begins.

Sir Edmund Hillary achieved many things in his lifetime, but he is most well known for being the first man, along with Tenzing Norgay, to summit Mount Everest. On May 29, 1953, Norgay and Hillary packed up and left camp (Letters From the Top of the World). That same day around 1 pm, both men summited Everest and began their decent fifteen minutes later, knowing their oxygen could last them only so long. Before descending, Hillary took pictures of all the ridges leading up to the summit to have solid evidence of their summiting and then took pictures of Norgay with his flags but did not ask for a picture of him to be taken. Hillary spoke of how once at the summit of Mt Everest, he was already planning out another expedition but of Makalu. (Sir Edmund Hillary Interview) “While on top of Everest, I looked across the valley towards the great peak Makalu and mentally worked out a route about how it could be climbed. It showed me that even though I was standing on top of the world, it wasn't the end of everything. I was still looking beyond to other interesting challenges.” People today, view Edmund Hillary as something of an iconic hero, one that set the standards higher since accomplished something everyone thought to be impossible, but even so, people tend to forget just how much we have been affected by this man's determination to better the world. “They conquered what they had planned and trained for. They were mountaineering firsts and exposed this new adventure to the world to also seek and conquer” (survey). This shows us is that we are all the same and we can all accomplish great things, it just takes a great deal of motivation and belief in one's self to separate them from the rest of the pack, and that standard still stands true today. Edmund Hillary

never stopped going and never thought that just because he had summited Mount Everest, that he could say he had done it all; to him, that was just one piece of his adventure.

At the time of his summiting, exploration was not widely advertised and many people did not believe things, such as summiting Mount Everest, was even possible; however, as soon as Hillary and Tenzing stepped foot on the summit of Everest, they opened a door for adventure to so many more than before. Today, so many more people are able to step out of their comfort zones and go out and try something new, because people like Edmund Hillary, have shown them that what they are doing, is possible. Yet, this accessibility to new things may not always be the best thing. Today, Mt Everest is more accessible in direct effect of Hillary and Tenzing's summiting and if you have money, you can climb Mt Everest. Hillary's opinion on the openness of Everest was "I really haven't liked the commercialization of mountaineering, particularly of Mt. Everest. By paying \$65,000, you can be conducted to the summit by a couple of good guides." (BrainyQuote). To many, this makes sense; Everest is not an easy challenge and should not be treated as one, nor should adventure have to be purchased or made to be viewed as less than a major accomplishment. Some say "They likely climbed it for their enjoyment not for a pat on the back" (survey), but that does not mean the achievement is any less remarkable. All the people leading up to Hillary and Tenzing's summiting put their lives on the line and pushed the limits for their time, so making their accomplishments seem less impressive is a dis to the hard work and dedication each person put into their attempts at Everest. One person said, "it undermines their achievement" (survey) in response to how they think the first two to summit Mount Everest would feel about people buying "rights" to the mountain. I posed a question in my survey "Do you think Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay would approve of how easily

accessible Mt Everest is today?” and the responses varied from and “They would would approve, even though it's still not something that just anyone one can be successful at completing. I think they would be disappointed in the manner people have treated the mountain, leaving expired supplies and trash,” (survey) all the way to “They'd probably be critical of how easily anyone with money can buy rights to climb it,”(survey). All in all, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay opened up a door to a whole other world for people to enjoy, but in the process of doing so, people have begun to take advantage of the Earth's beauty and have begun to use it as a popular factor and not something that takes great work. Nowadays, people with money can buy what they want, even adventure, and Hillary began to notice this as the years went on. Hillary did change the way the world looked at exploration, but he also said that people should be climbing for the hell of it, not the recognition. All of Hillary's hard work is still recognized today, but in some ways, it is being taken advantage of.

Hillary and Norgay's summiting of Mount Everest is one of the mighty stepping stones that has opened up adventure for all people, of all different kinds. “Adventuring can be for the ordinary person with ordinary qualities, such as I regard myself”(BrainyQuote). No one would have known that by summiting Everest, Edmund Hillary would become one of the most influential people in the world, even years afterwards. What is truly remarkable about the whole situation is that Hillary showed everyone that if you are motivated and dedicated enough, you can do whatever you want. Though everything, Edmund only ever considered himself an ordinary guy even when the world was telling him he was a hero. “You don't have to be a hero to accomplish great things---to compete. You can just be an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated to

reach challenging goals” (azquote). **How could one man be so extraordinary but remain so humble in the midst of his success?**

After his expedition of Everest, Hillary later joined another expedition; the British Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, where he helped lead the group along with the owner, Vivian Fuchs. In 1967, Hillary along with others, were the first to scale Mount Herschel. (Encyclopedia Britannica) **After that**, he led a boat expedition up the Ganges River into the Himalayan Mountains. No matter how many expeditions Hillary accompanied, he never lost sight of the next adventure he would go on, and this passion has reflected over into today, showing us all to always continue exploring. Since Hillary helped make exploration more widely popular, many wonder what he would say about exploring today since so many places have already been discovered and it seems there aren't many places left untouched by the human hand. Some say “GTFO (get the fun outside)” (survey) and others say that “he would argue that there are still MANY places to explore if they were here today” (survey). Adventure is never over, even if someone has already done something for the first time. Over the course of his lifetime, Hillary has shown the world that adventure is out there, we just need to GTFO and reach for the skies. And through all of his accomplishments, what Hillary was most proud of at the end of the day, was his greatest action of all: setting up the Himalayan Trust Fund (HTF).

Beginning in 1962, Hillary began working alongside Tenzing Norgay, with the Nepalese Sherpas (The Low-Profile Pair Who Conquered Everest). His foundation helped install bridges and pipes, build nearly thirty schools, two hospitals, twelve medical clinics, and two mountaineering clinics. The foundation also helped to restore missionaries and helped plant more than a million seedlings around parts of Nepal. Hillary said that he believes that it was the way

he was raised by his parents that caused him to start the Himalayan Trust Fund. His whole life he had seen his parents take care of those around them who were less fortunate than they were, so when he saw that the Sherpas did not have a lot, he decided to dedicate his life's work to bettering their lives.(Sir Edmund Hillary Interview). Here is a brief statement about the HTF and its beginning, "The Himalayan Trust is a direct legacy of the British 1953 Everest expedition that put Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay on the summit of Everest. Without the support of the Sherpas, Everest wouldn't have been climbed, and Sir Ed wouldn't have had half as much fun climbing in the Himalayas following Everest as well. It was Sir Edmund Hillary and his NZ companion George Lowe who first felt a compulsion to give something back to the Sherpas who had so enriched their lives. Sir Edmund Hillary's vision led to the first support for the Everest region" (Himalayan Trust UK). Not only does this show us to be grateful for those who help us achieve our goals, it shows the world, even today, that through all our success, never forget to give back to those who have less than you. Edmund Hillary shared his heart with the world with the work that he did. He was creating a better future for children; building those schools and helping save lives, building hospitals and medical clinics. Everything Edmund Hillary did seemed to be for the better welfare of people. He once said, "If you have plenty - more than enough - and someone else has nothing, then you should do something about it" (BrainyQuote). He was such a humble man, who did something so amazing, but viewed it as just a small step, and could have done anything with his life, but chose to turn around and devote his life to those who had less than him. Throughout the years, Edmund Hillary taught us to be grateful of the work that people do to help us and remember to thank all those who have helped you; all together saying, remain humble. His persistence in remaining humble allowed the world

to see that, no matter how many mountains we climb, there will always be another to climb and others to take care of.

Today, Sir Edmund Hillary, athlete, explorer, and philanthropist, is no longer with us. He passed January 11, 2008 in Auckland, New Zealand. **Even so**, many traits of Edmund Hillary will be remembered and will continue to live on. His inspiring words of courage and wisdom are some of the many never-to-be-forgotten traits. Of the many inspiring words Hillary said, one that truly accentuates the effect he has had on our world today is “It’s not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.” Through all of our successes and failures in life, in the end, it’s not what we accomplish, but what we become by pushing ourselves to reach our goals. Never giving up on what has been inspired, creating challenges to accomplish goals set, and accomplish dreams, is what Hillary continues to inspire people today. Sir Edmund Hillary never gave up on his dream and following his heart; no matter how impossible and unreasonable they seemed to be. Next time you are out exploring, climbing a mountain, or doing anything in the great outdoors, don’t forget to think of Edmund Hillary and how his first step on Mount Everest has opened doors for the rest of us to do the same as he did. Don’t forget to GTFO.

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