



# Business Lessons from an Olympic Luger



**London, England (CNN)** -- Ruben Gonzalez, 47, made history in Vancouver by becoming the first person to compete in four Winter Olympics in four different decades.

It's a feat made even more remarkable considering that -- by his own admission -- Gonzalez is no natural athlete. In fact, he says he was terrified of the luge until two years ago.



Four-time Olympian Ruben Gonzalez is one of the country's leading keynote speakers.

His story is one of succeeding through willpower alone, and as a motivational speaker and author of books including "The Courage to Succeed," Gonzalez says he wants to motivate others to be high achievers.

Born in Argentina, Gonzalez moved to the United States as a child. "When I was a kid I wanted to be in the Olympics, but I'm not a super athlete and I was always the last kid to get picked for sports so it was just a pipe dream," he told CNN.

After watching the 1984 Sarajevo games on TV, Gonzalez became determined to turn his Olympic dream into reality. All he had to do was find the right event.



**“Every success you’ve ever had or will ever have is the product of your courage to act and the courage to endure.”**

**- Ruben Gonzalez**

"My strength is not athleticism, it's perseverance, so I thought I've got to find a sport with a lot of broken bones, a lot of crashes. Maybe there will be a lot of quitters and I just won't quit -- and that's why I picked the luge," he said.

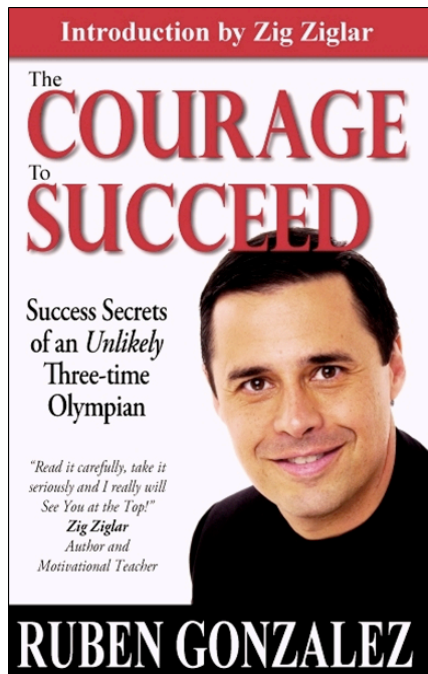
He contacted the U.S. Luge Association and was told he should have started 10 years earlier. Undeterred, Gonzalez took up one of the world's most dangerous sports at the age of 21 and managed to qualify for the 1988 Calgary Games, representing Argentina. But he says his success was more to do with courage than ability.

"No matter what your goal is, whether it's to become salesman of the year or to double your company's revenue, you need two types of courage -- the courage to get started and the courage to endure," he told CNN.

"For 20 years I didn't like the luge. My knuckles were white coming down the track I was so scared. But I did it in spite of the fear because that was my only chance to make my Olympic dream come true."

When it comes to being a high achiever, Gonzalez told CNN that changing your focus can change your performance.

He said his own breakthrough came when his coach told him he needed to stop focusing on speed and start looking at what needed to be done every section of every curve of the track.



The bestselling book "The Courage to Succeed" is a manual on how to become a high achiever.



"In business today people are focused on the economy, and you can't do anything about the economy," he said.

His advice is to stop focusing on the economy and start focusing on taking positive actions for your business.

Ask yourself what can you do in the next 15 minutes to take your business forward? Who do you need to call right now? Which relationships do you need to strengthen so that when the economy has turned around you'll be in a strong position?

While he admits the economic downturn has hurt his own business as a speaker, he believes you can turn the recession into an opportunity.

"You have to develop an attitude that you are willing to outwork, out hustle and outdo the competition, especially now, because the chances are the competition's going to be playing it safe. So this is a time to shine," he told CNN.

Gonzalez believes that in the long term the recession could be good for those who are able to rise to the challenge. "It's a shakedown where the weak are going to fold and the strong will be stronger in a couple of years," he said.

He advises that you surround yourself with a "dream team" of mentors who can support you in your career, try to associate with positive people who will inspire you, and avoid negative people who can undermine your self belief.



A training technique that Gonzalez believes applies as much to business as the luge is visualization.

"With luge you only get four or five runs a day, so to get good you have to visualize the drive down the track," he said. "You can do the same thing [at work] by visualizing a cold call, or what you're going to do when you give a presentation.

"Preview in your own mind what the outcome is going to be. Try to imagine the best-case and worst-case scenarios. You have to know how to handle every situation so you visualize all the scenarios that could pop up."

**"You have to develop the attitude that you are willing to outwork, outhustle and outdo the competition."**

**- Ruben Gonzalez**

As you might expect for a man known for his persistence, Gonzalez also has some advice for when things go wrong.

"I've learned that when things feel the worst and you're starting to get down and are ready to quit, that's usually when you are really close to reaching your goal and you don't even know it."

To watch a video filled with highlights of Ruben's most popular presentation visit:

[www.FourWinterGames.com](http://www.FourWinterGames.com)

832-689-8282