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How to Prepare to Boldly Pursue Your Goals

by Four-Time Olympian Ruben Gonzalez

Why do people play it safe? Why do they hesitate instead of boldly attacking their goals and living life to the max? Because fear gets the best out of them.

Most people let fear of the unknown and fear of failure keep them from pursuing their dreams. Fear is a thief. If you let it, fear will rob you of your goals, your dreams and what could be the best of your life.

Most people picture the worst case scenario. They visualize the worst thing that could possibly happen and then the fear immobilizes them.

But think of it this way — no one should fear failure, because when you fail to get the results you want, all you need to do is try a different approach. The only time fear of failure is justified is the last time you're willing to try.

What about fear of the unknown? Fear of the unknown is often just a smokescreen because, if you face your fear, the fear will disappear.

But how do you get yourself to face your fear and act boldly? One way is to reduce the fear by managing your risks.

Whether you're partaking in a risky recreational activity, you have a high-risk job or you're trying to reduce your business risk, there are several ways you can manage your risk. You can't ever eliminate risk, but you can definitely manage it so you'll feel confident about taking bold action towards your goals.

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Plan Ahead And Create Contingency Plans

I've been competing in the luge on and off since 1986 — hurling myself down an icy chute at more than 90 miles per hour while experiencing up to 6 G-forces on the tightest curves.

Most people think lugers are thrill seekers. We're not. The thrill seekers don't make it past the first season. Lugers are analytical. So are many test pilots, race car drivers and mountain climbers. Lugers treat the tracks with respect, and we do everything we can to prepare and to plan our luge runs.



No matter how many times we've been to any track, before taking any runs we walk the track with our coach and come up with a game plan. What lines will we take? How will we steer down the run in order to have the best time?

Then we talk about “escape routes.” What will you do if you are too early into curve one? What about if you are too late into curve one? What if you hit the left wall before curve one? What if you hit the right wall? And so on — for all 15 or 16 curves of the track.

By doing that, we gain confidence because we know we can handle anything the track can throw at us.

The application in business is to rehearse your sales calls and presentations and have an answer for every objection your prospect could possibly have.



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Follow A Coach, Guide Or Mentor

Ever since I was a kid, I wanted to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. There was something romantic and exotic about Kilimanjaro that drew me to it.

Kilimanjaro is a mile higher than any mountain in the Rocky Mountains. At the peak, the air is much thinner, meaning only half of the oxygen molecules are available for a single breath compared to at sea level. Although it's not a technical climb, every year a few climbers die while trying to climb it.



So, how does a flatlander from Houston climb it? Simple. I hired one of the world's top mountain guides, Dean Cardinale. Dean has climbed Everest and had climbed Kilimanjaro plenty of times.

At the trailhead, Dean got really serious and said: "For the next five days, you step wherever I step. You rest whenever I rest. You drink water whenever I drink water. You eat whenever I eat. Most importantly, tell me right away if you feel any discomfort. Because things get worse really quickly at high altitudes. If you follow my lead, in five days you'll get to take a picture on the top of Africa."

Dean taught us how to force oxygen into our lungs by pursing our lips when we exhaled. He taught us the "rest step," which is a special way of stepping that conserves energy. It turns out that climbing a mountain is all about energy management.

I'm not a mountain climber. I'm a mountain follower. By following my guide, I got to climb Kilimanjaro, one of the Seven Summits.

Don't reinvent the wheel. Find someone who has already done what you want to do and follow their advice.

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Do Your Due Diligence

Ever since I read Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, I've wanted to run with the bulls in Pamplona, Spain. But unlike most people, I didn't just go do it. Before going to Spain, I read three books about Pamplona and I even called the author of one of the books — a man who had run with the bulls every year for 20 years.

I told him, "I need some tips. I want the Pamplona experience, but I don't want any holes in my body."



He gave me a handful of simple tips that reduced my risk considerably. He told me where to stand, where not to stand, what to do if I fell, to watch out for the drunks because they're more unpredictable than the bulls, to watch out for bulls that have broken away from the pack and a few other nuggets.

By following his advice, I ran with the bulls twice and lived to tell about it.

Don't be rash in the pursuit of your goals. Do your due diligence, get the facts and then you'll be able to boldly take action based on a solid plan.

If you create contingency plans, follow a mentor and do your due diligence, you'll drastically reduce your risk and be likely to take more action and reach your goals faster than you ever thought possible.

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